METALSMITH

JEWELRY • DESIGN • METAL ARTS

SUMMER 2002

volume 22 number 3
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Tea and Jewelry

Bohemian Rhapsody

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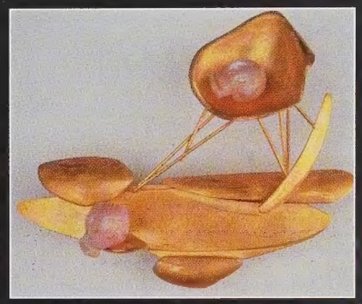

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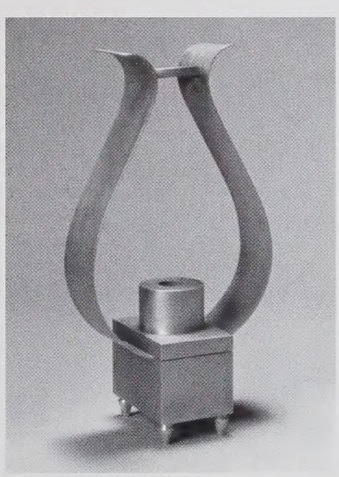

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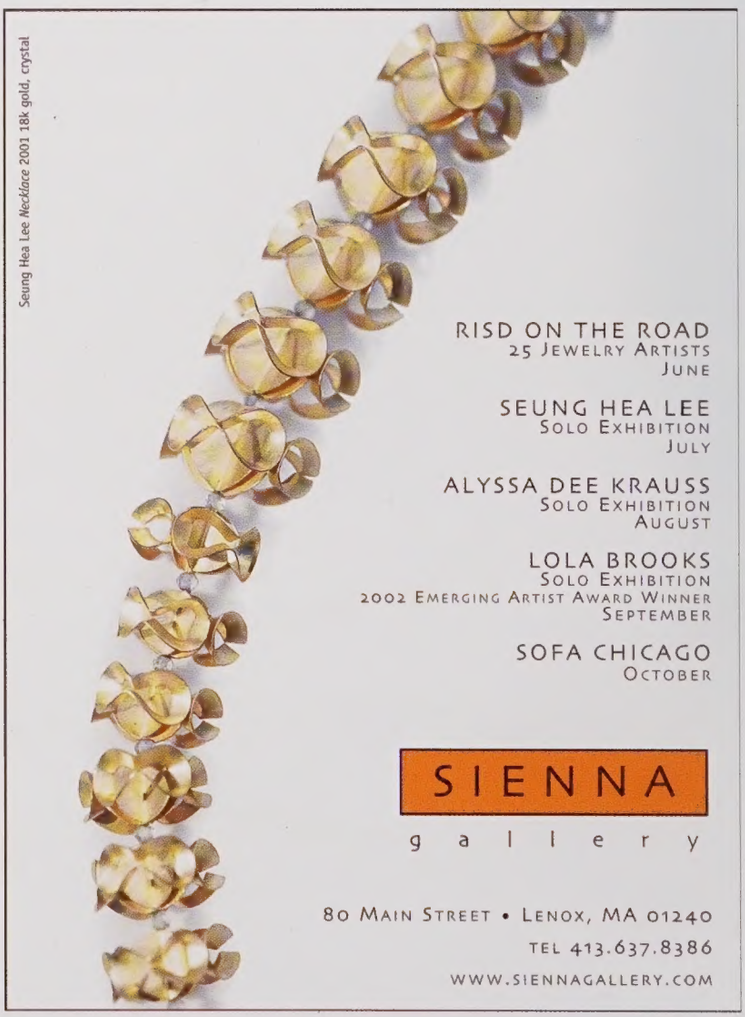

Seung Hea Lee *Necklace* 2001 18k gold, crystal

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Simon Cottrell, brooch 2001, green gold, monel

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METALSMITH VOL 22 NUMBER 3

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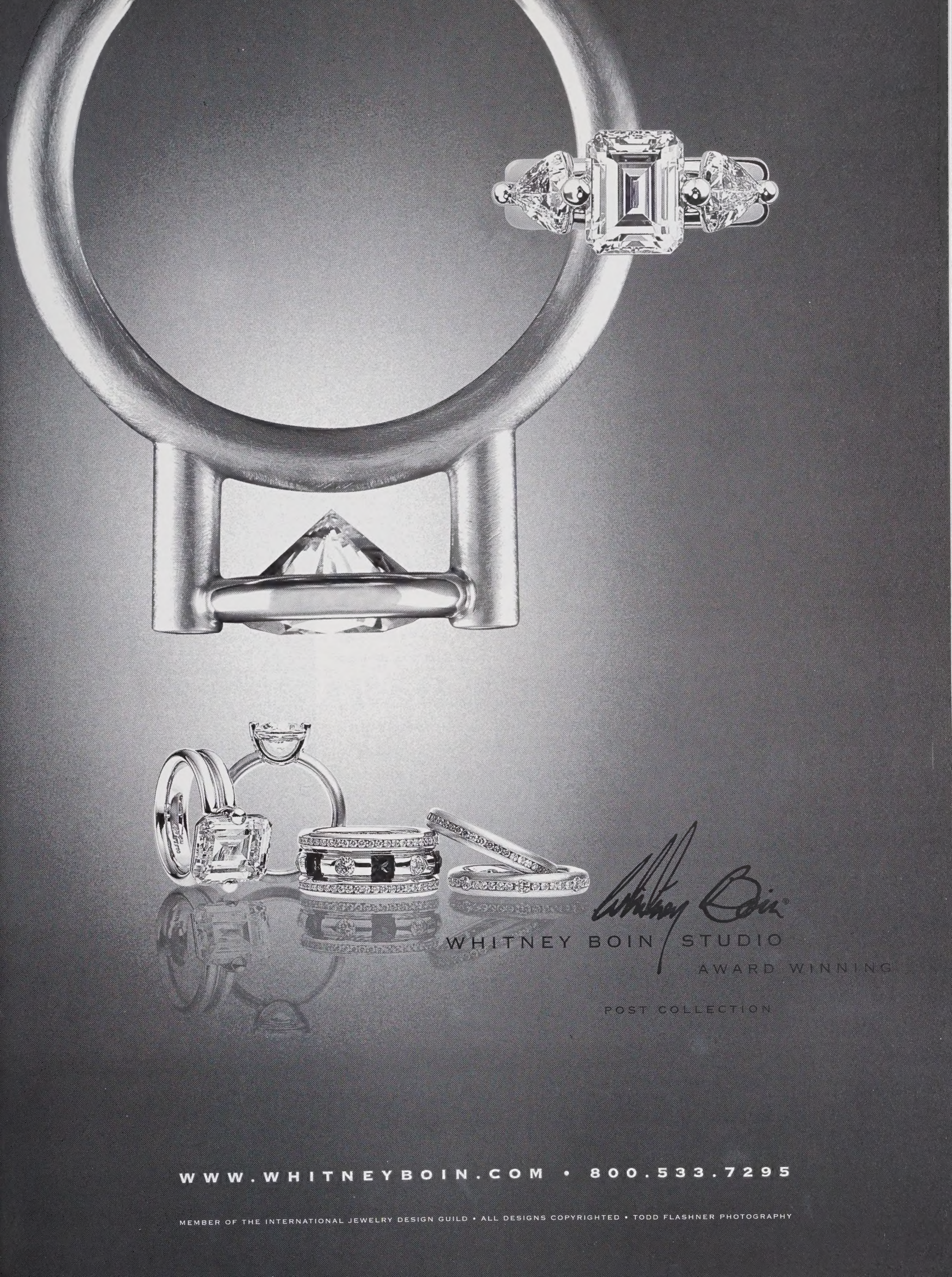
Harry Bertoia
Earrings, c. 1948
brass
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Collection Liliane and David M. Stewart
Photo: Giles Rivest

Sharon Church
Commemorative Brooch for a Bleeding Heart, 2000
carved and dyed Cuban mahogany, old European cut diamonds, oxidized sterling silver
$2\,3/4 \times 2\,3/4 \times 3/4$"
Photo: Thomas Brummett

Barbara Seidenath
Rosegarden (ear decoration), 1993
enamel, coral roses, pearls, 20k gold, diamonds
$1 \times 1 \times 1/4$"
Photo: Jochen Grun

cover
Barbara Seidenath
Crystalline (brooch), 2001
enamel, sterling silver, niello
$1\,3/4 \times 1\,3/4 \times 1/8$"
Photo: Marty Doyle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FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

This issue of *Metalsmith* could rightly be subtitled "the return of the repressed," as several articles seek to unearth overlooked or taboo material. This aim is most pronounced in Bruce Metcalf's essay, "Embodied Sympathy," which argues for the importance of sympathy as a neglected, albeit essential, aspect of artistic experience. As Metcalf states, "Sympathy depends on an ability to reconstruct another person's emotional condition," and is implicit in all our social intercourse. Without sympathy (or its twin, empathy), we would be estranged from each other, unable to connect or comprehend.

While this sympathetic impulse has managed to survive within the craft world—evident in works by jewelers such as Sharon Church or Pat Flynn—sympathy and other tender emotions have been marginalized by twentieth-century art and theory. As Metcalf suggests, perhaps one of the reasons that criticism has shied away from discussing such feelings is that they do not easily lend themselves to analytical thought. Although the experience of sympathy may be difficult to articulate, like love or joy, it is nonetheless a crucial component in our lives and demands expression within artistic work and discourse.

Other articles in this issue reveal both a sympathetic understanding of their subjects and retrieve forgotten content. Toni Greenbaum's second of two features on jewelry in southern California shines a spotlight on San Diego's rich and varied legacy, which has long been overshadowed by the activity in the San Francisco area. The unearthing of buried content is central to Jay Song's work, featured in the "Observations" section. As the artist explains, "I'm not a secretive person, but my work tells me I have many layers. I have a secret room in my heart telling me to do this kind of work." And the re-emergence of removed material also plays a role in the work of Kiff Slemmons, who is the subject of our "Studio Visit." Slemmons periodically purges her large studio table—which serves as a sketchbook, laboratory, and archeological site—to regain creative clarity, but "always a few items are found back from the previous year, refusing to budge."

It is hoped that within these pages you will find the occasion to exercise your own sympathy and discover hidden terrain. . .

SR

METALSMITH

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Editor Suzanne Ramljak
Graphic Design Catherine Jacobi, Ted Studios, Inc.
Copy Editor Kate Hensler Fogarty
Production Coordinator Dana Singer

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Membership, Subscriptions and Additional Copies
SNAG/Metalsmith Business Office
710 East Ogden Avenue, Suite 600
Naperville, Illinois 60563-8603
(630) 579-3272, FAX (630) 369-2488
info@snagmetalsmith.org

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Executive Director
Dana Singer
2275 Amigo Drive
Missoula, Montana 59808
(406) 728 -5248 FAX (406) 728-2729
DSinger@SNAGmetalsmith.org

Advertising
Jean Azzato
16 Dunbar Court
Bedminster, New Jersey 07921
(908) 901-9767 FAX (908) 901-0770
metalsmithads@aol.com

Editorial Materials
Suzanne Ramljak
22 Rockwell Road
Bethel, Connecticut 06801
(203) 792-5599 FAX (203) 792-5588
metalsmitheditor@aol.com

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Confluence Bracelet 18k Gold and Pearls

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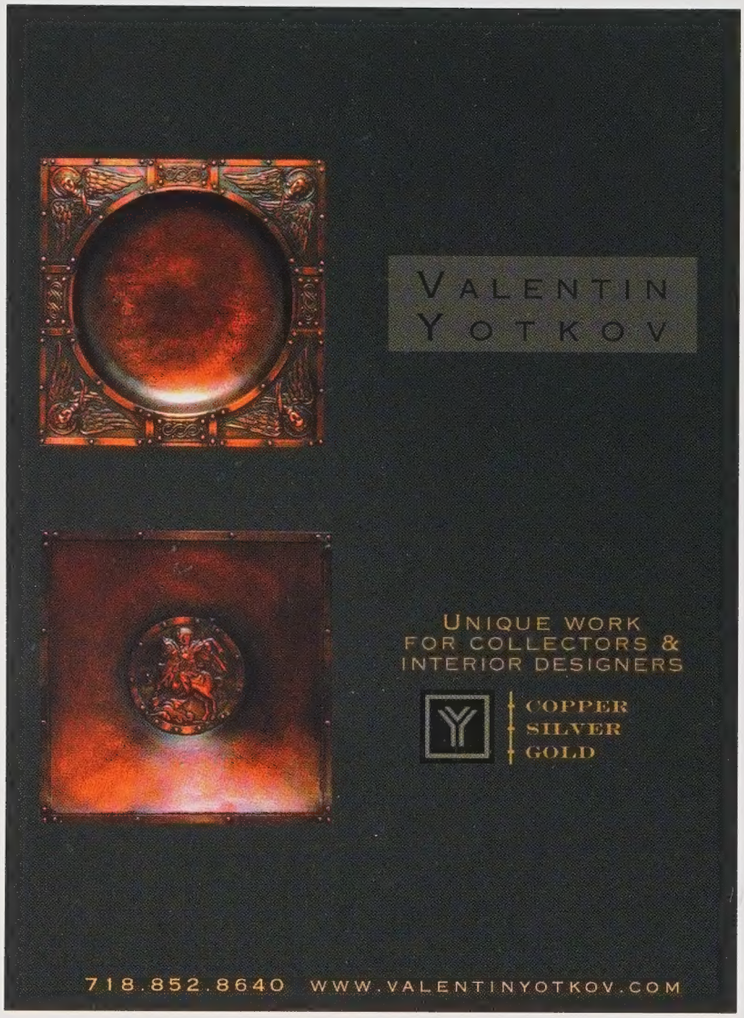

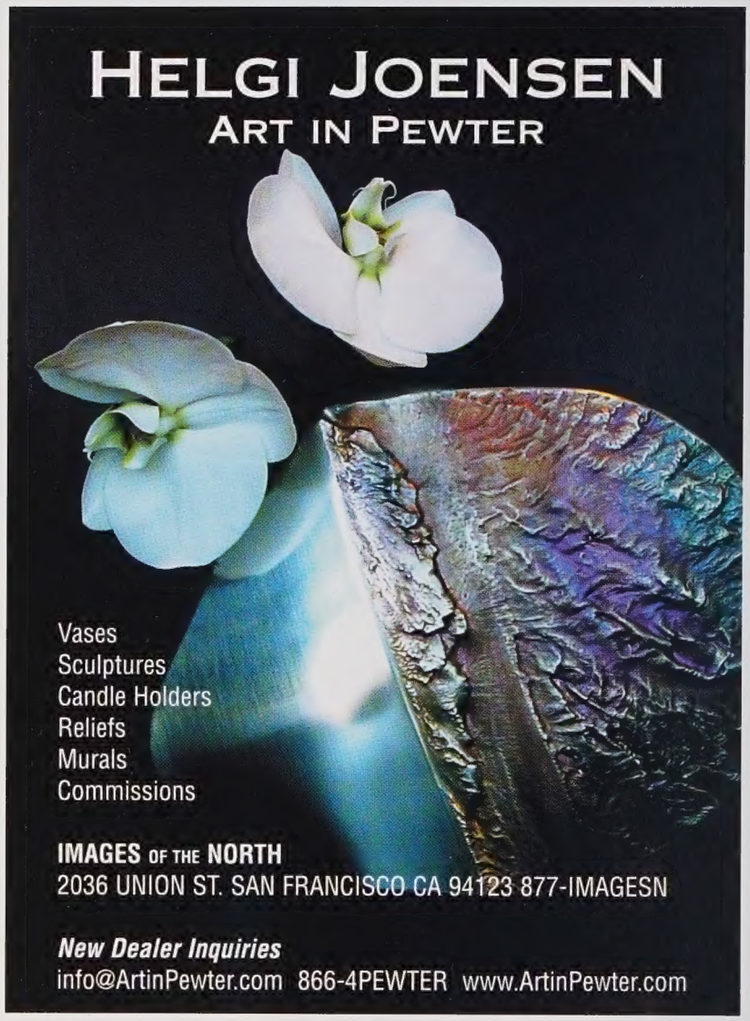

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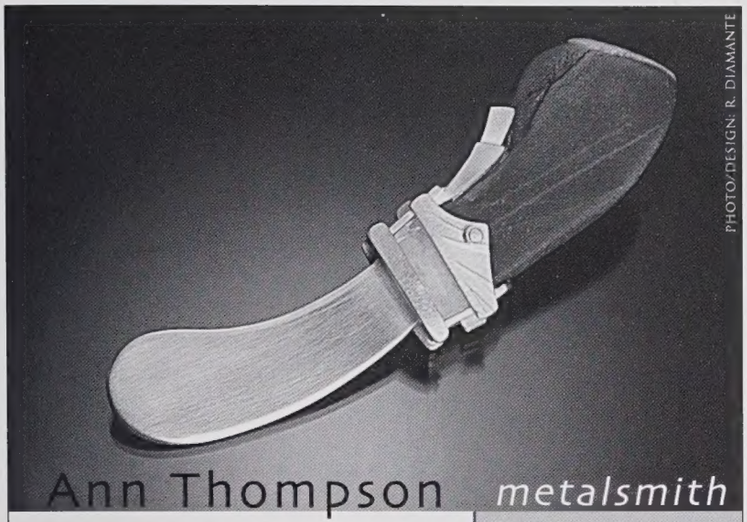
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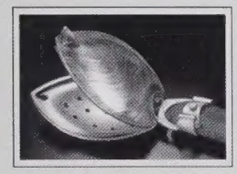

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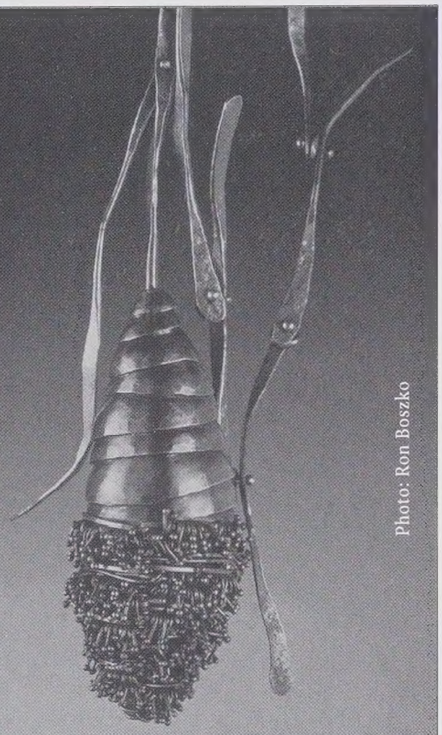

Photo: Ron Boszko

"Magnolia Bud" *necklace, bronze, copper, sterling silver*

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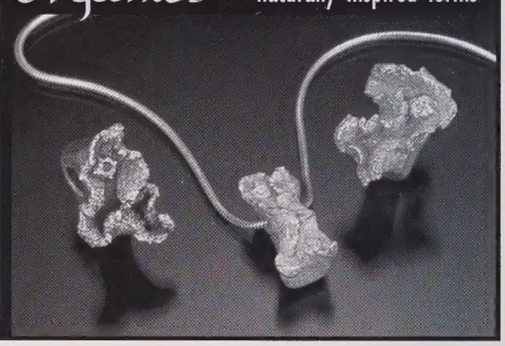

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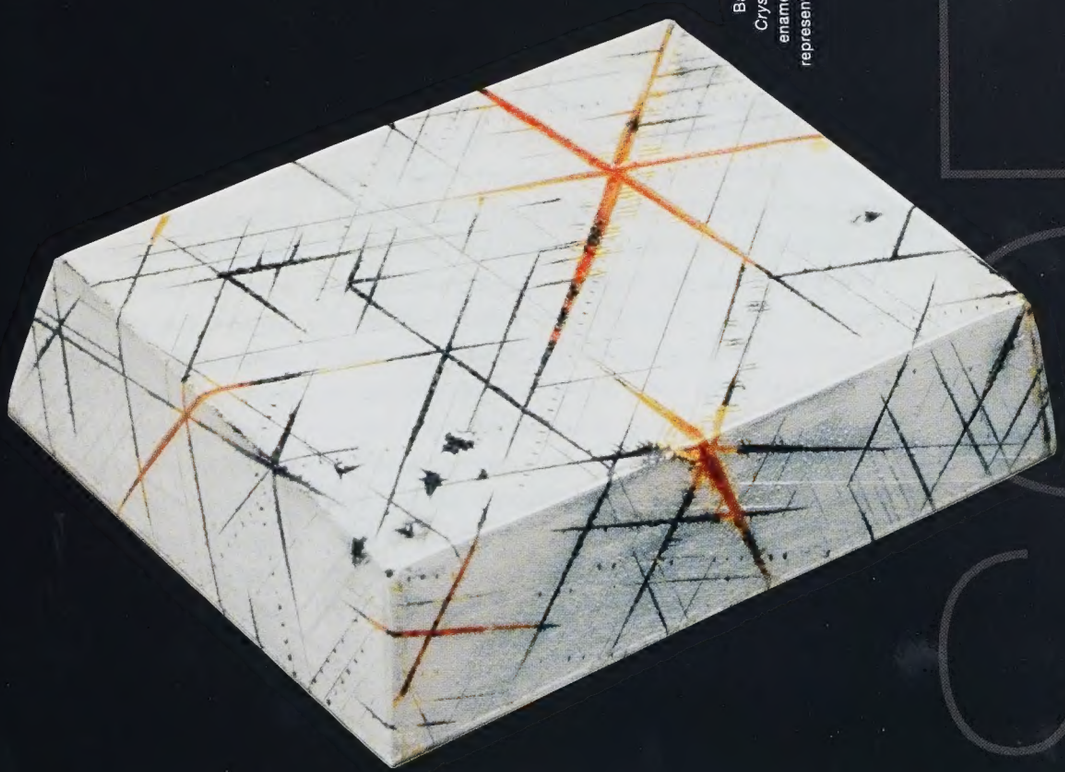
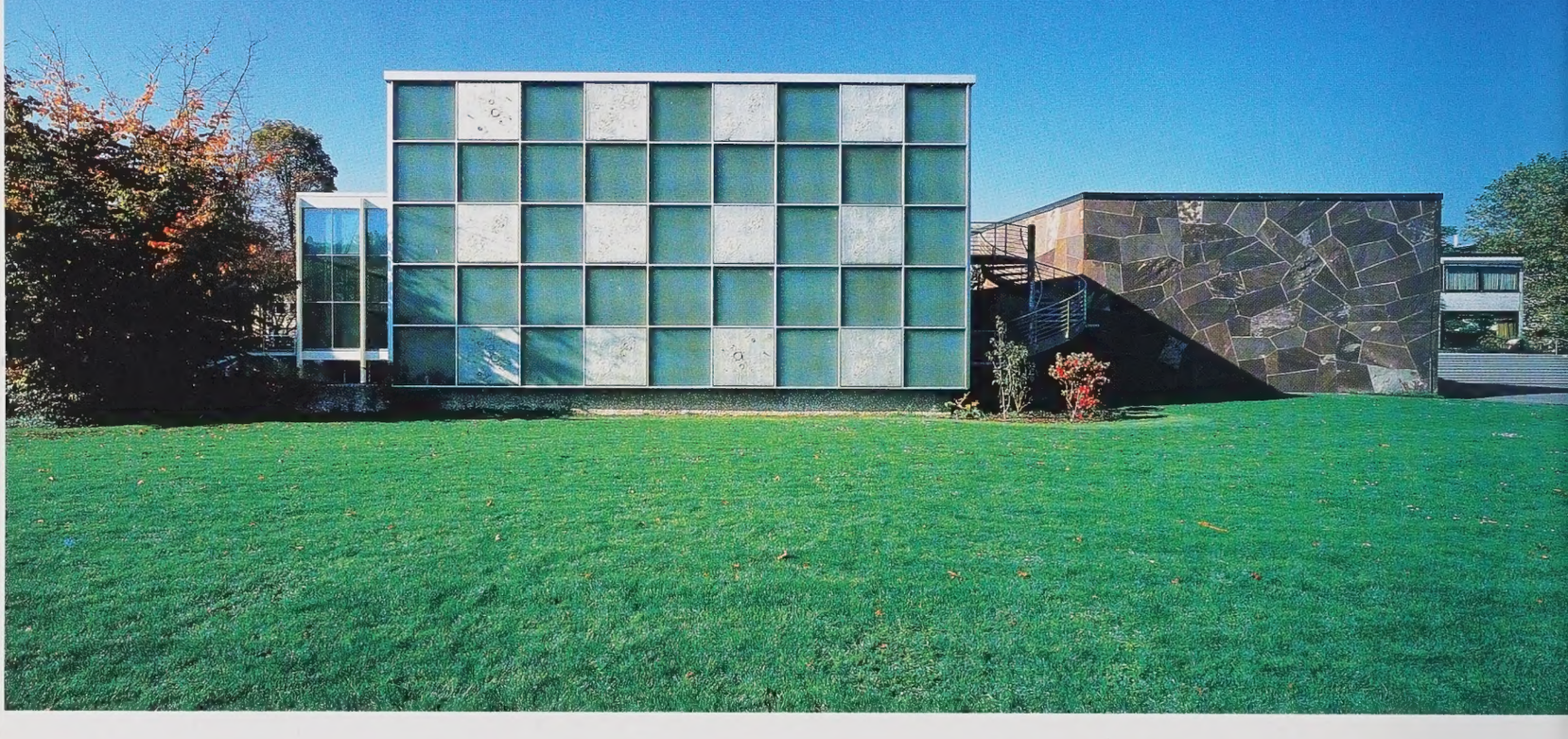


Barbara Seidenath
Crystalline, 2001
enamel, silver;
represented by Sienna Gallery

OPINION

On a Jewelry Museum in America

by Thomas Gentille



Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim
Photo: Valentin Wormbs

Some dreams in the sky do float
a fortress surrounded by a wellspring moat
brought to earth by reality and structure
glorifying not that which came before
but that which is new . . .

The Europeans are often angry with me if I begin a sentence with, "In America we . . . ." The Americans respond in kind when I begin, "The Europeans. . ." In Europe the idea that jewelry is a fine art is so established they are unable to understand why in the United States this is still under discussion. As an American jeweler I am in complete accord. I also wonder why we Americans have yet to establish a museum dedicated to the art of jewelry.

A jewelry museum does not make jewelry fine art; the artist-jeweler does this. However, a jewelry museum can provide large, flexible, and superb exhibition accommodations enabling works to be seen in a domain of their own scale. In the United States the approach to showing jewelry requires some thoughtful and serious exploration. That is not to say I haven't seen fine installations here, but the Europeans are far more inventive than we, in part because jewelry is often displayed without the demands of enclosed cases. Europeans—out of respect, or at least in command of their tactile impulses—do not touch jewelry on display any more than they reach out to touch a painting.

The American Craft Museum in New York City already has an important collection of contemporary jewelry, and the intention of making it the largest in the United States. Two recent jewelry exhibitions at the Museum, "Radiant Geometries" and "Mikromegas," proved to be extraordinary. Patron Donna Schneier has recently given them a substantial collection of 200 works and a catalogue is being produced that will be the definitive one on the period covered.

Nonetheless, there appears to be a continuing struggle within the museum as to which discipline will receive financial support for installation, publication, public relations, and gallery space. This is of course endemic to any museum that concerns itself with multiple disciplines. A museum devoted exclusively to jewelry can avoid the many pitfalls of interdisciplinary division. It can also be a repository, care keeper, conservator, chronicler, educator, publisher, leader, explorer, and purveyor of ideas; in other words, everything any museum worth its salt can and should be but often is not.

Three years ago jewelers Pavel Opocensky, and Jiri Sibor and I drove from Prague to Pforzheim, Germany, to attend the opening reception of Peter Skubic's retrospective exhibition. The Pforzheim Schmuckmuseum is located in a small dirty industrial town. Both the town and the museum within it are a bit off the beaten track. As Pforzheim's primary industry is the manufacture of commercial jewelry and jewelry manufacturing equipment, many store windows do not display clothing, furniture, or flowers, but row upon row

of gleaming jewelry equipment. For a jeweler it equates to being a kid in a candy shop.

Tucked in behind the grubbiness is a gently curving street lined with trees which run parallel to a clear water creek banked by more trees. Two small concrete footbridges cross over the sound of rippling water. All is slightly moat-like in appearance. A few clean buildings create a sparking enclave, and part of the complex but independent is the humanisticly scaled Pforzheim Jewelry Museum; a lovely stone fortress with no visible windows.

Skubic and his wife, jeweler Petra Zimmerman, were in attendance, along with many other excellent jewelers and collectors. They had come to this out-of-the-way place from Germany, Austria, Japan, Korea, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, Czech Republic, United States, and several other countries. Skubic's opening lasted several hours, during which the museum opened its other galleries. A tremendous collection, not all of which can be shown at one time, is exhibited there in overlapping rotations. That evening I saw numerous ancient pieces of Greek, Egyptian, and Roman jewelry through the Renaissance, and all the way up to an impressive and masterful body of work from the 20th century. Including Skubic's retrospective I saw about 2,000 works; an adrenaline experience.

It takes time to build a personal collection unless you are Peggy Guggenheim, buying one painting or sculpture every day. Collectors, if they are good ones, are passionate about their acquisitions. Parting with them is not easily or lightly considered. Often it is a multilayered decision: a desire to share the work with a greater number of persons; to have the collection safeguarded; to keep it intact; to make space for new acquisitions. Whatever the reasons, where their collection eventually resides is of paramount importance to them and, through their generosity, to us.

Establishing a jewelry museum would be relatively uncomplicated, given an open-minded approach to formulating a sound, albeit creative, charter. My own sense is that the museum's collection should begin in the mid-20th century. In the late 1930s and '40s, and especially the '50s, jewelry began to evolve from the point of view of the artist, rather than that of the jeweler. Margaret de Patta (1903-64) of California did some of the most important and influential jewelry from the period, producing a powerful body of geometric work expressing her concerns for reflection, refraction, and optical distortion. Art Smith (1917-1982) in New York approached jewelry as body ornament, rather than ornaments for the body. He perceived the body as an armature, developing a welcome symbiosis between human and metallic form. Sam Kramer (1913-64) also of New York while not a skilled craftsman, based his work in Surrealism. It was filled with crude mystery, hostility, and by association, poetry.

There are about 40 other important American jewelers from this period. It is at this fulcrum, especially with de Patta, Smith, and Earl Pardon (1926-91) that the museum's permanent collection should begin. Many fine works from the period are still available. Eventually earlier works of the precious materials school could enter the collection through private donation or special purchase, to act as a base of historical interest rather than an impetus for the new collection.

I also believe that the museum would be best located in Manhattan, for many reasons but primarily because most jewelers from around the world eventually arrive in this city. I envision an open, minimal space with extreme flexibility. A floor would be devoted to the permanent collection and another to changing exhibitions. There would be a gallery that carries one-of-a-kind and limited-edition jewelry for purchase, which might coordinate with current and changing exhibitions to help support of the museum. The library would include online research and video monitors for viewing jewelry installations as well as slide collections available for viewing, rental, or purchase. There would be a small bookstore carrying jewelry artists' catalogues along with good quality aesthetic and technical books relating to jewelry. The museum should also have a comfortable cafe for visitors; an area for informal lectures; and two or three small self-service bedrooms with adjoining bath, at youth hostel rates, for visiting out-of-town jewelry artists, lecturers, and jewelry research scholars.

"Some dreams in the sky do float/brought to earth by reality and structure. . . ." In this case, a charter, a building, a patron. Some person or persons ready to begin a grand adventure, an extraordinary journey.

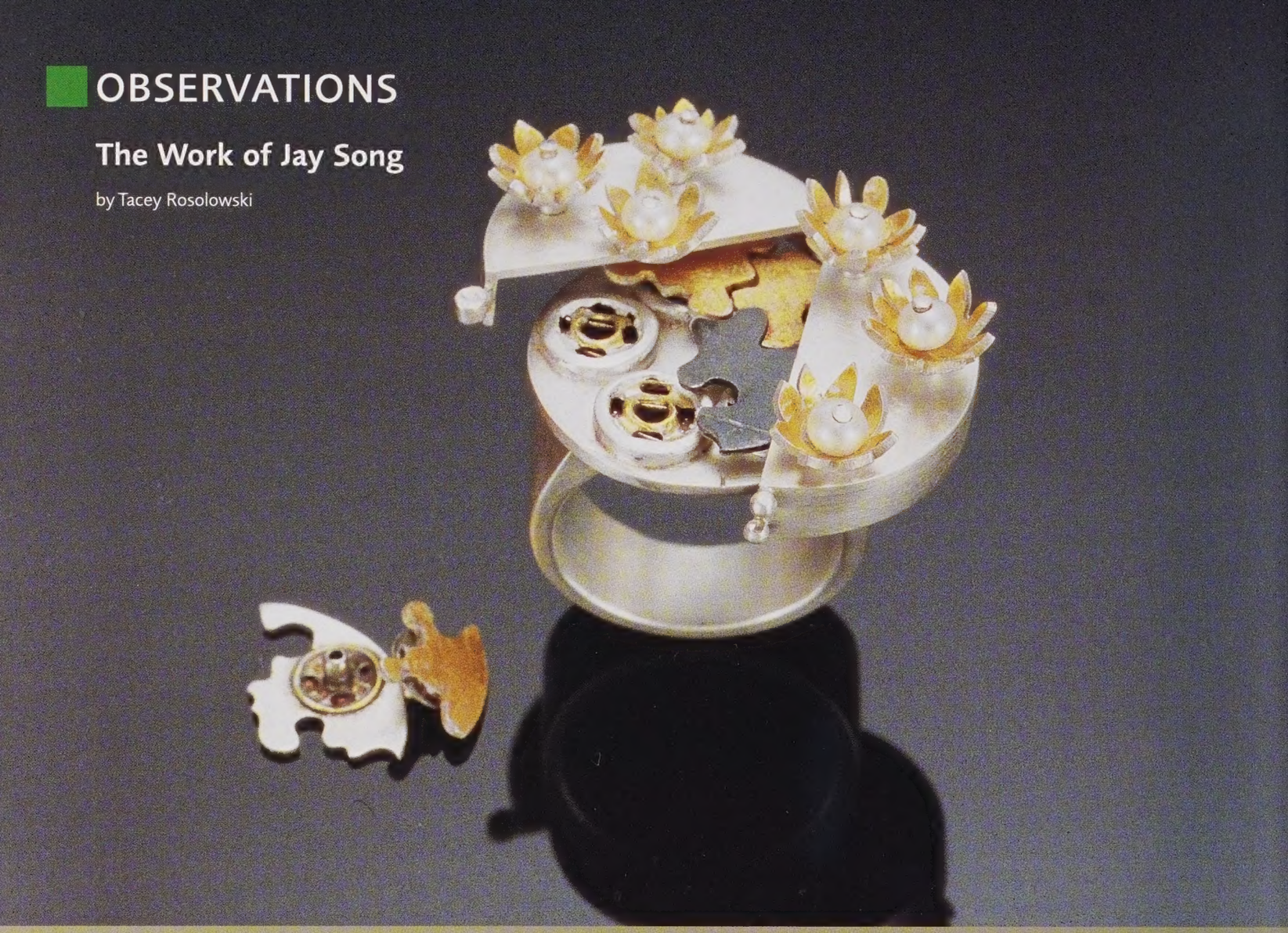
It's the right time for a jewelry museum in America. "Some dreams in the sky do float/brought to earth by reality and structure. . . ." In this case, a charter, a building, a patron. Some person or persons ready to begin a grand adventure, an extraordinary journey. ■

Thomas Gentille is an artist based in New York City.

OBSERVATIONS

The Work of Jay Song

by Tacey Rosolowski



Puzzle, 1999
sterling silver, gold foil, steel, snap button
1 x 1 1/4"

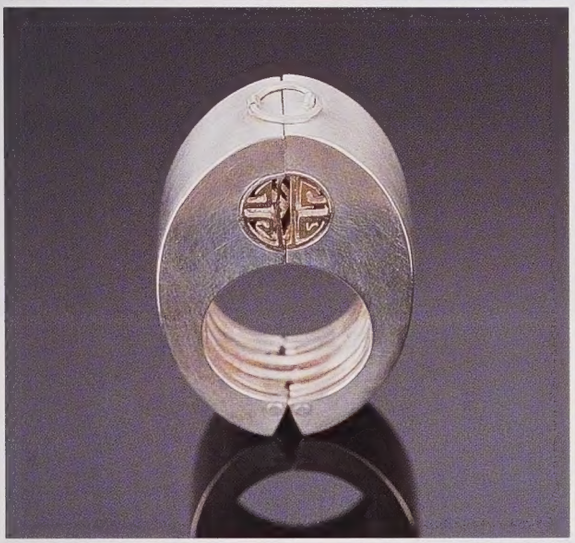
Jay Song affirms, "My experiences are memories, but they accumulate in my body." Living in the United States, far from her native Korea, Song externalizes her memories in personally symbolic rings. Yet, with their interactive elements, these ornaments also draw in the wearer and viewer by generating tensions between visible surfaces and concealed interiors. Song's rings use hands as expressive sites where "the memories that no one can see become visible—they are alive."

This enlivening function is particularly poignant in the case of *Funeral*, a ring that memorializes the rape and murder of a friend's mother. Song attended the funeral, breaking with Korean tradition, which dictates that women participate only at the end of the service. Deeply affected by the tragedy and the funerary rites, Song created a ring whose shimmering silver recalls the pan-Asian mourning color, white. Its hexagonal form replicates the ritual vessel that contains a body's ashes after cremation. Song cut one character into each side, representing love, joy, hate, greed, anger, and happiness—the six basic emotions in Korean thought. These elements "humanize the form," while the cover invites the wearer to activate the ring's symbolism. The cover is incised with the character for sin. Carefully removing this reference to the rape/murder is a purifying act: the container's sides unfold and one is left contemplating a chrysanthemum, the Asian funeral flower, delicately rendered and evocative of how life and death affect one another. Song fabricated the ring's band with a design of a bridge because "the ring is a bridge between life and death."

Much more playful is *Puzzle*, a ring to toy with during what Song calls the "heart-beating time" she herself experienced while waiting for an admired man to call; as the minutes tick by, the wearer can move the flowers about, then open the ring and distract herself with the five puzzle pieces. *Ms. Hyde* is a humorous homage to Song's best friend in Korea. The young woman was very Westernized, fashionable, and pretty, yet when she got drunk she went out of control, picking fights, collapsing on the street; atypical of Korean women, to say the least, as was her habit of opening beer bottles with her teeth. *Ms. Hyde* honors a dual identity: its curving feminine filigree contains a working steel bottle opener. It is Song's memoir of a beautiful friend whose hidden characteristics—however odd—deserve practical recognition.

With *Myself*, Song says she discovered the importance of self-portrait; here she confronts Western influence on her own character. *Myself* at first appears simple and uncomplicated, ornamented only with an Asian design motif commonly found on doorways. This surface is indeed a portal: the ring spreads open to reveal three inner layers symbolic of a faceted personality. The first

Funeral, 1999
sterling silver
$1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{7}{8}$"



Myself, 1999
sterling silver, simulated tourmaline and aquamarine, cubic zirconiums
$1 \times 1\frac{1}{4}$"

Ms. Hyde, 1999
sterling silver, steel, tourmaline
$1\frac{1}{4} \times 1$"

juxtaposes bamboo and the rose, deftly interwoven symbols of Asian and Western cultural influences. On the back of the bamboo is another rose figure, just as on the reverse of the rose is bamboo. "You can't tell which side is the stronger; they blend," Song says. She also uses this strategy of double juxtaposition with the pink tourmaline and blue aquamarine, contrasting traditional Korean femininity with masculinizing Western influences. At the core, black and white cubic zirconiums signify the ambivalence of moral decisionmaking. For Song, all of these currents "exist in a harmony that makes my life richer."

"I'm not a secretive person," Song observes, "but my work tells me I have many layers. I have a secret room in my heart telling me to do this kind of work." Each ring has a outwardly expressive force, yet Song expands the commemorative function of rings to honor the inner complexity we all carry. She engages our hands with rings that open up, draw us in, and let us explore—in physical and psychic terms—the hidden spaces of memory and identity. ■

Tacey Rosolowski is a writer currently living in Utica, NY.

STUDIO VISIT

Kiff Slemmons

by Maria Phillips

top
Kiff Slemmons in her studio, 2000.

above
Detail of the artist's work table, 2000.

right
Red Leak, 2001
silver, rulers
$3\,1/2 \times 1\,1/2$"

The entryway to Kiff Slemmons's house is enveloped in dense green foliage and beckons me up the stairway. A beautiful miniature tree growing from a freestanding rock greets me; at once monumental yet utterly precious. As I turn the corner and follow the path through the arbor of grapevines, barren after a fruitful summer, I hesitate and reminisce about my last visit. Earlier this past summer, I walked this path and discovered Kiff and her husband Rod, harvesting the grapes and pressing them for fresh, sweet juice. Yet at this moment, the atmosphere created by the Seattle winter is different. The hue of the trees and gardens is intensely deepened by the notoriously constant mist. The studio, which sits behind the house, radiates a warm light.

A collection of rocks, planks of worn wood, old ceramic electrical fixtures, a mailbox stuffed with sage, and a plaster impression of a hand covered in a light moss embellish the studio doorway. The windowpane vibrates as I tap on it, announcing my arrival. Kiff greets me and immediately we launch into conversation. She shares with me a gift she has just received in the mail: a collection of eyeglass repair parts, wonderfully curious pieces, tiny in scale. We are both fascinated by the various components, but it is the careful arrangement and packaging of the pieces that Kiff points out. This sensitivity is evident throughout Kiff's work, nurtured throughout childhood while spending hours at the printing presses with her father, the editor/publisher of an Iowa newspaper, and experimenting with the delicate instruments of her mother's practice as a pharmacist. It wasn't until the 1970s that Kiff realized that these elements, combined with her literary and artistic interests, could be expressed through metalsmithing.

Kiff leaves me in her studio, alone. This is her idea: that I should spend time in her space with her objects and make my own observations. Immediately I feel awkward, like a trespasser or a voyeur. The studio is steeped in history, every surface layered with elements of Kiff's aesthetic appreciation, travels, intellectual and literary interests. Slightly overwhelmed, and uncertain of where to begin, I summon Alice in Wonderland and tumble in. Originally, the studio was a two-story mother-in-law apartment. The kitchen's old, deep porcelain sink doubles as a work surface, while the countertops and cabinets display numerous artifacts. The second story waits patiently for its next guest. What was once the living room is now Kiff's studio.

As I survey the studio, it is apparent in the choice and placement of objects and furniture that Kiff's approach is holistic and finely honed. Her unique aesthetic permeates every corner of the studio, and the objects collected here establish a complex personal language. Metalsmithing tools rest on top of a small wooden folding chair. Handcarved bowls cradle loops of silver wire. Solid and worn beams support Kiff's forming tools. Hammers act as paperweights, resting on top of an open sketchbook. The benches are flanked by the artwork of Kiff's primary teachers, "the anonymous jewelers of nonindustrial societies." Necklaces of beads, bone, paper, and plastic converse with endless assortments of found and collected objects. Stacks of boxes, with multiple compartments filled with pebbles, shards, buttons, and beach glass set in bezels, wait.

Two surfaces act as stages for the physical assemblage of Kiff's work. One is a traditional jeweler's bench adorned with saw frames, files, and scraps. The other is a wonderful wooden table, weathered by past lives and framed by a picture window. This table is a soldering bench and the home and stopping place for found objects, wooden trays filled with "bits and characters," antique oil cans and counting tools. Seasoned hand tools and heirlooms reside in handcrafted ceramic, metal, and wooden cups. Covering the table's surface are pieces in progress, fragments set in bezels, capped pencil stubs, pierced and fabricated sheets of metal waiting to be relocated.

My eyes catch those of an antique stuffed animal with wheels for feet. I move across the room in its direction. A collection of tin scoops of varying shapes and sizes grabs me next. I find them dear, and searching for more I discover instead a yellowed piece of paper pinned to the side of a cabinet. It reads, "Diagram of a Tin Can Scoop," handwritten, step-by-step instructions, in pencil, with childlike illustrations. Wonderfully detailed, naïve drawings, a style that most adult artists wish they could recapture. Kiff later explains that this is a drawing Rod made as a child.

An old card catalogue file cabinet stands prominently and full of promise—its drawers dense with collections of commonplace materials removed from their original context. One drawer is overflowing with buttons; the next presents cellophane envelopes containing bugs' wings. Another offers a selection of paper ephemera—words and definitions cut from the pages of old dictionaries, photographs of eyes—plus dice, old metal bits and pieces. The reference to the library and to language is apt, as this cabinet and this room contain fragments of Kiff's visual language—a language that draws on the intellectual and literary traditions of the Surrealists.

The studio's centerpiece is a large table that Kiff acquired five years ago. She professes that this surface "has assumed a complicated role as sketchbook, laboratory, and active battleground for ideas." An integral part of her work ritual, the table is "a place where found objects and partially completed pieces form and reform, comfortably or uncomfortably juxtaposing, patiently waiting or demanding scrutiny." It is only after considerable "observation and analysis that a piece comes together and gets completed."

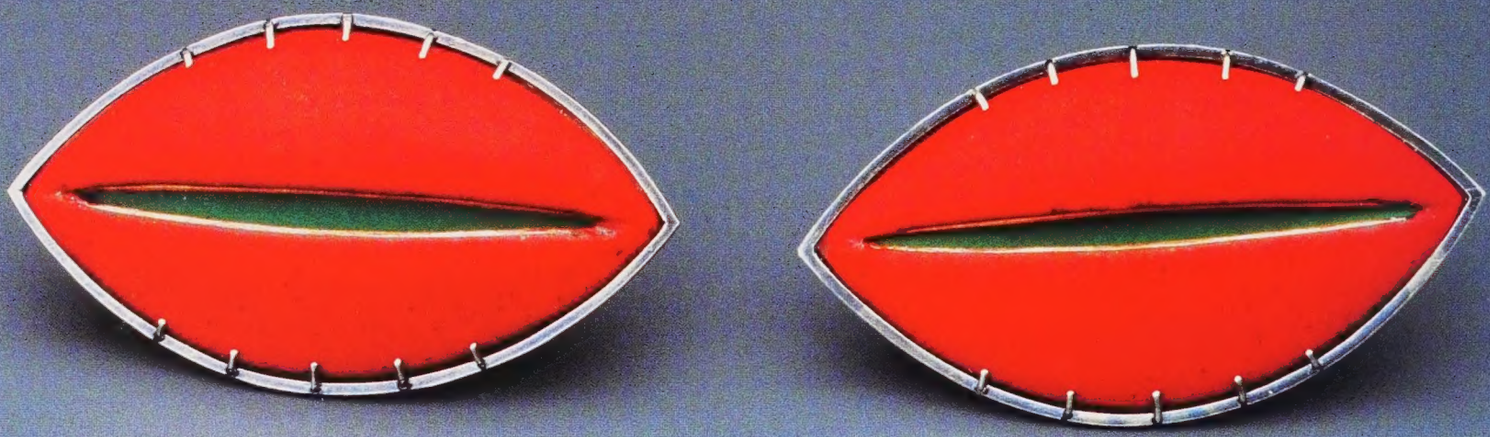
In the "laboratory" that is this table, I discover diverse fragments coupled with emblems of Kiff's history. Zippers, pencils, and hands direct me to the unexpected. I am drawn to a cluster of pussy willow tips stuffed in a metal container; together they resemble some form of sea life or a bed of furry fingertips. In the lid of the container are two oversized amber buttons. An organized group of finely sharpened black pencils reminds me of crows perched next to strange shards of plastic that I do not recognize immediately. After a few moments I realize they are the remains of an old telephone receiver. Elements of punctuation cut from bright green and red yardsticks scream out, as if to clarify what lies before me. For every handsawn piece of metal, the negative image of that shape is somewhere close by. Tiny animal bones appear to be intentionally arranged, waiting for identification. Bezeled antique knobs carefully placed in a necklace format compete with an arrangement of buttons for completion. Butterfly wings lay beneath discs of mica, broken doll hands held together with a rubber band are clasped together, while two sets of wooden printing blocks ask "why? ," "WHY?"

Vitality permeates the accumulation; the repetition, the patterns, the disparate objects and the resulting alliances that occur on the table. Equaling the vitality is a certain amount of tension, a tension created by the sheer mass of materials, in turn creating a sense of chaos. This chaos is intentional, yet subconscious; a function of the creative process that Kiff embraces. The chaos induces a sense of awkwardness and unease, yet it is the awkwardness that stems from what Kiff considers "the skill and knowledge of knowing how to do something." Kiff employs this awkwardness, attempting, as she explains, to "trust, the not always knowing." The outcome of this trust: mystical, complex pieces of jewelry layered in meaning and metaphor, meaning that engages and directs the viewer in unforeseen directions that are savvy, witty, challenging, and stirring.

I find an excuse to return a second time. After nearly three hours of conversation, Kiff and I laugh at the realization that we haven't even begun to discuss my questions for the article. We didn't have to; it was all there, on the table, on the benches, and winding throughout our conversation. Finally, Kiff reveals, "Usually by the middle of winter the table has gotten so dense it becomes an indecipherable archeological dig. The chaos becomes counterproductive and I have to clear everything off and start over. I sometimes force the issue by having a big dinner party on the table. But always a few items are found back from the previous year, refusing to budge." ■

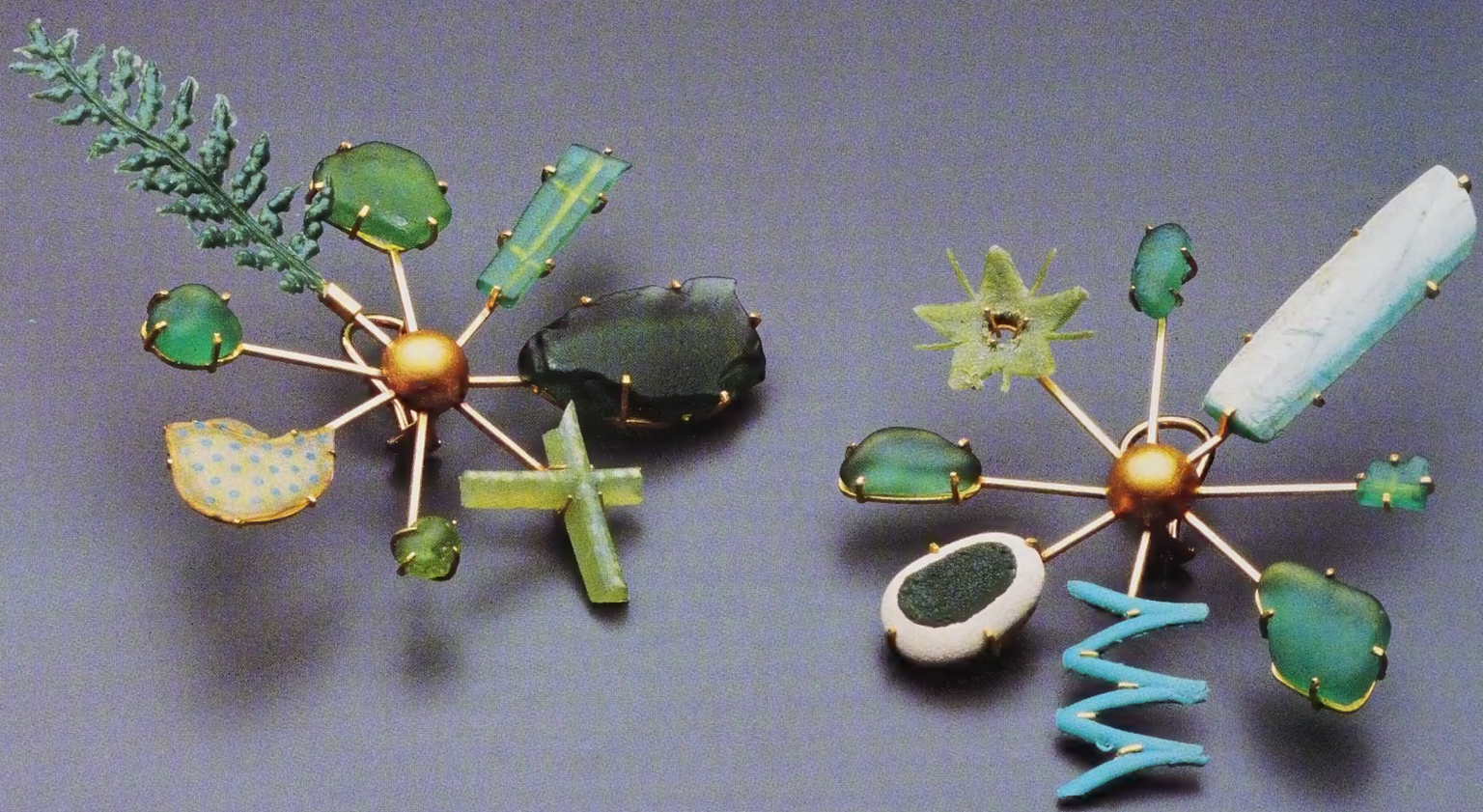
Maria Phillips is an artist-metalsmith and instructor living in Seattle.

Photography by Rod Slemmons



Untitled (ear decoration), 1991
enamel on copper, sterling silver
1 x 1 x 1/2"
Photo: Jochen Grun

Robin Hood (ear decoration), 1990
glass, plastic, ceramic, 18k gold
1 3/4 x 1 3/4 x 1/4"
Photo: Jochen Grun



Bohemian Rhapsody

Importing Barbara Seidenath

by Marjorie Simon

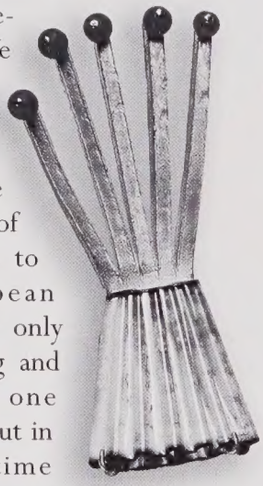
Biography today favors the family crucible over history or culture. Yet people do not live outside their times, nor are they immune to accumulated history.

Birdies (ear decoration), 1994
enamel, coral, 18kt gold.
$1 \times 1/2 \times 3/8$"
Photo: Roger Birn

What is now Germany was a loose association of princely states. Bavaria, in the southeastern portion of the region, included the Sudetenland, one of the semi-autonomous regional governments of the 16th and 17th centuries. As early as 1850 the regions had their own arts and crafts associations, part of a long tradition of support for the arts. Although close to Switzerland, Bavaria is not mountainous, but an area of rolling hills and plains, with forests where wolves, dwarfs, and giants might well have lived. It also includes that section of the current Czech Republic that became part of Germany when Hitler annexed Austria. Here was a center of art and commerce known as Jablonec, the home of the famed Bohemian glass industry, where, even by the end of the 19th century, there was a state technical school for arts and crafts. When Venetian glassmakers sold out their state secrets to Czech glassmakers, Jablonec began its hegemony in glass beads. The region also became renowned for through its production of costume jewelry during the second half of the 18th century, and together the two industries helped it survive numerous European conflicts and two world wars. After World War II, however, the Germans were expelled and resettled in NeuGablonz, the German name for the old Czech town. Jablonec, however, still exists as the center of Czech glass beadmaking.

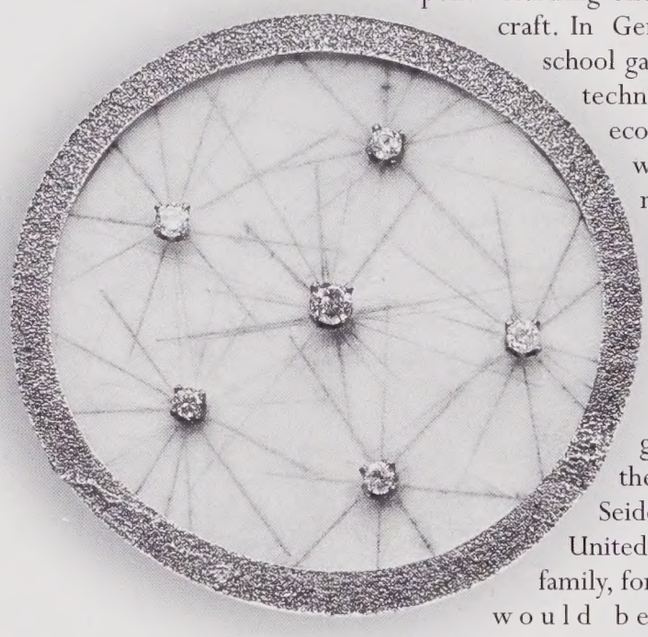
It was here that the personal narrative of jeweler Barbara Seidenath met up with European history. Being born 15 years after the end of World War II meant coming to terms with still-fresh memories of German culpability, identity, and responsibility. But from the turn of the 20th century onward, Germany had also been home to a number of significant art movements. From 1911 to 1914 a loose association of artists who called themselves Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) exhibited together and published a journal of the same name. Though disbanded by World War I, the short-lived movement nonetheless exerted a notable influence on German thought; young artists like Seidenath considered them part of their cultural heritage. At the same time, growing up in rural Bavaria gave Seidenath great physical freedom; living in the same village community as the noted German goldsmith Hermann Jünger was her other good fortune. In addition to the longstanding support for the applied arts from regional arts councils, it was her long and close association with the Jünger family that demonstrated the possibility of a creative life.

As a young girl Seidenath really did roam the forests of Bavaria, making tree houses and rabbit hutches. Even now, her studio is filled with visual reminders of nature, and botanical subjects recur regularly in her jewelry. Her father worked for the forest service and weekends were often spent measuring trees. Seidenath's mother was a school doctor whose schedule and temperament allowed her to oversee handmade projects with her children, much the custom in that time and place. In considering these early influences, Seidenath recalled that she had even accompanied her grandmother to the village goldsmith for repairs; the young girl was fascinated by the dark workshop and the variety of tools. Her early friendship with Anette Jünger, Hermann's daughter, reinforced her attraction to craft and making, although at the time she was also aware of glass because of its strong regional presence. Teenagers often find other families more convivial than their own, and the Jünger household was lively, creative, and intensely appealing. This influence, with the backup of the educational system, contributed to Seidenath's development as a young artist.



Hands (ear decoration), 1996
enamel, 18k gold, coral beads.
1 x 1/2 x 3/8"
Photo: Jochen Grun

Winterpond (brooch), 1999
enamel, sterling silver, diamonds
1 5/8 x 1 5/8 x 1/8"
Photo: Roger Birn

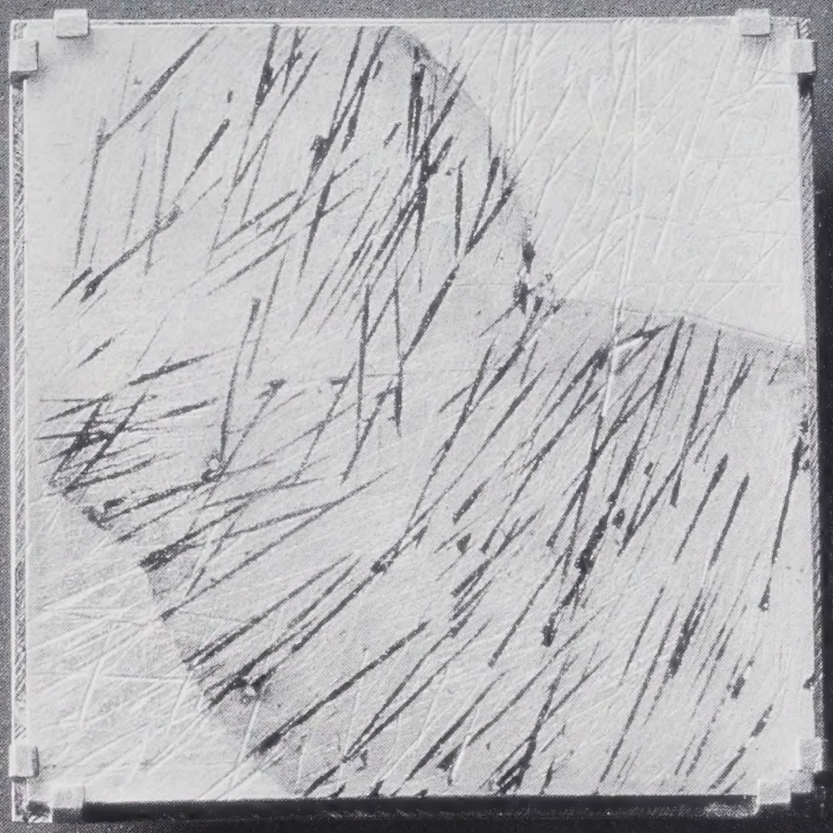


Where there is support for art, artists will develop. Where art is made, artists will thrive. With a strong craft tradition behind her, Seidenath enrolled in the three-year state school for glass and jewelry in NeuGablonz. She characterizes it as "pretty rigid, not adventurous....[Especially] the second year was very, very rigorous. Perfection was expected to within one-tenth of a millimeter! We all hated it, but I learned a lot." Like many young students, only later did she realize how much she had learned. The level of mastery we have come to associate with European craftsmanship comes not only from the rigorous training and apprenticeship, which one might receive anywhere, but in the greater length of time spent learning one's craft. In Germany the state school gave a solid base in technique at an economic cost that was affordable to most families; graduate school was where one's sense of design and aesthetic developed.

After graduating from the State School, Seidenath visited the United States with her family, for the first of what would become many significant American experiences. Back in Munich, she went to work for the established German jeweler Ulrike Bahrs, whose influence may be seen in Seidenath's periodic inclusion of varied and colorful materials. She also worked for Jünger, to whose studio she would return several times in the next decade. Returning to the United States in 1981 she spent a semester at SUNY/New Paltz, where Robert Ebendorf already had a connection with Jünger, then lived in New York City, where Robert Lee Morris's downtown gallery Artwear was in its heyday. Here was production jewelry that was not industry-driven. After all, in Jablonec the industry was and is still making conventional designs in wire, castings, and local stones. Seidenath liked the example of a democratic approach to jewelry set by the American jeweler Margaret de Patta. She spent several years in the mid-'80s absorbing New York and the American metals community before returning again to Munich, and to Jünger, and eventually entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.

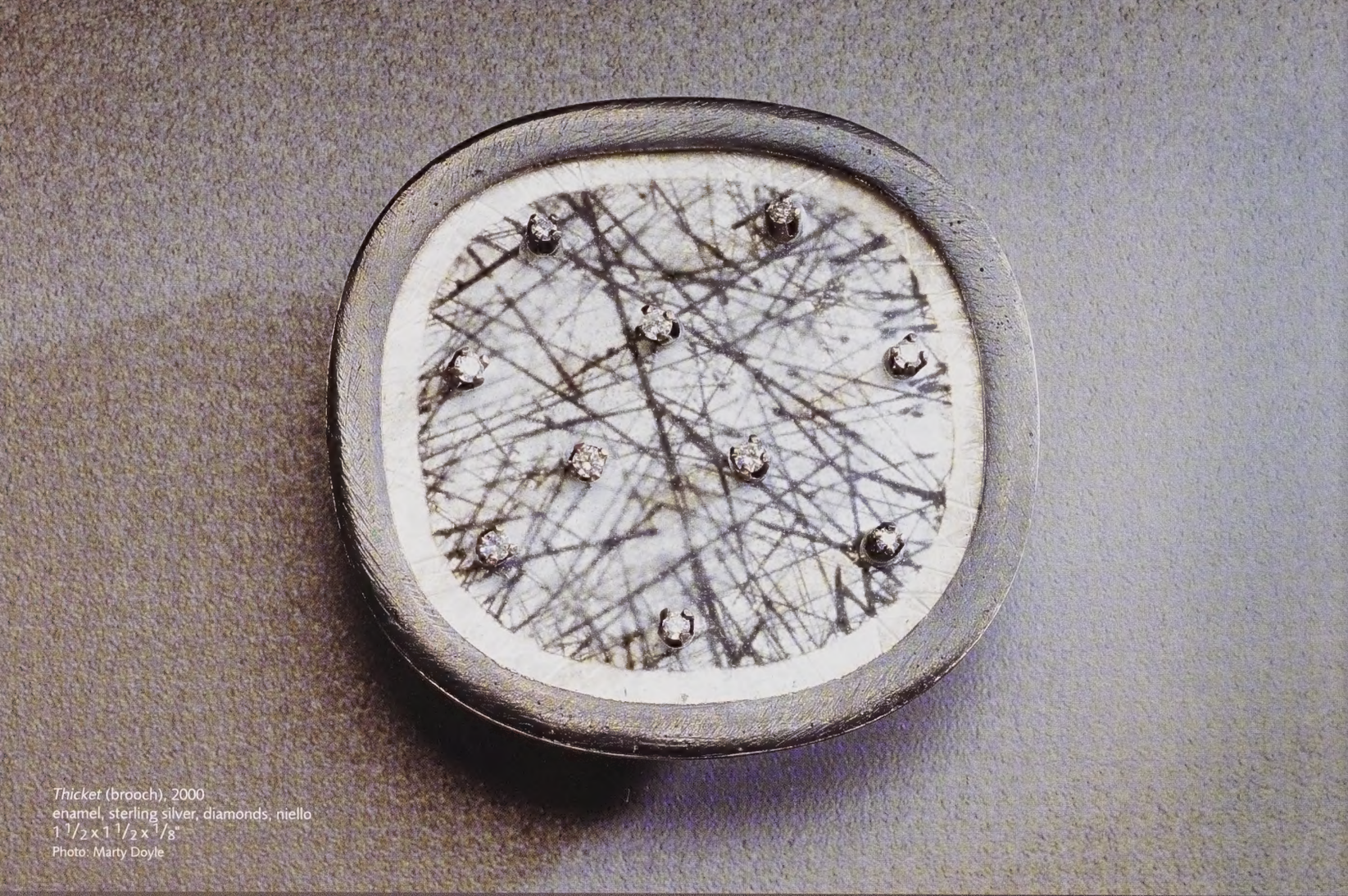
The Academy gained its superior reputation under the stewardship of Hermann Jünger. Here he trained the next generation of German jewelers, led most notably by Otto Künzli and Daniel Kruger. By the time Seidenath arrived, there was some pressure on this young group to see what they would do after the excitement of in the 1970s, which had been a decade of explosive design innovation everywhere.[1] The list of Seidenath's colleagues reads like a who's who of contemporary German jewelry: Alexandra Bahlmann, Detlef Thomas, Rudolf Bott, Bettina Speckner, Angela Hübel, Christoph Jünger, Johan van Aswegen, Karl Fritsch, even American Sondra Sherman, who was living in Germany at the time. The Munich community was energetic, engaged, and supportive, in an environment where design was already emphasized. Jünger came in once a week, but otherwise students were on their own; there was no technical instruction per se, but the prevailing ethos was design-oriented. Later, as before, Seidenath further refined her skills by working for Jünger. His method of instruction went something like this: Jünger showed her design sketches and asked, How would you make this? It was her job to figure out the fabrication and construct it to his standards.[2] Evaluating her experience today, Seidenath observes, "It seems very strict and German, and a lot of 17- or 18-year-olds are not accustomed to working to those kind of standards. [But] looking back on it, it has so much value." Seidenath spent 10 years between her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She received her MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich in 1990, following five more years of study.

After practicing for 20 years, Seidenath fears nothing. She doesn't have to think when soldering; it has become like another language (she is already easily fluent in English as well as German). In 1994 she came to the United States more or less permanently, and joined her husband, metalsmith Louis Mueller, on the faculty of Rhode Island School of Design, where she has taught ever since, in a department itself known for its European orientation and frequent



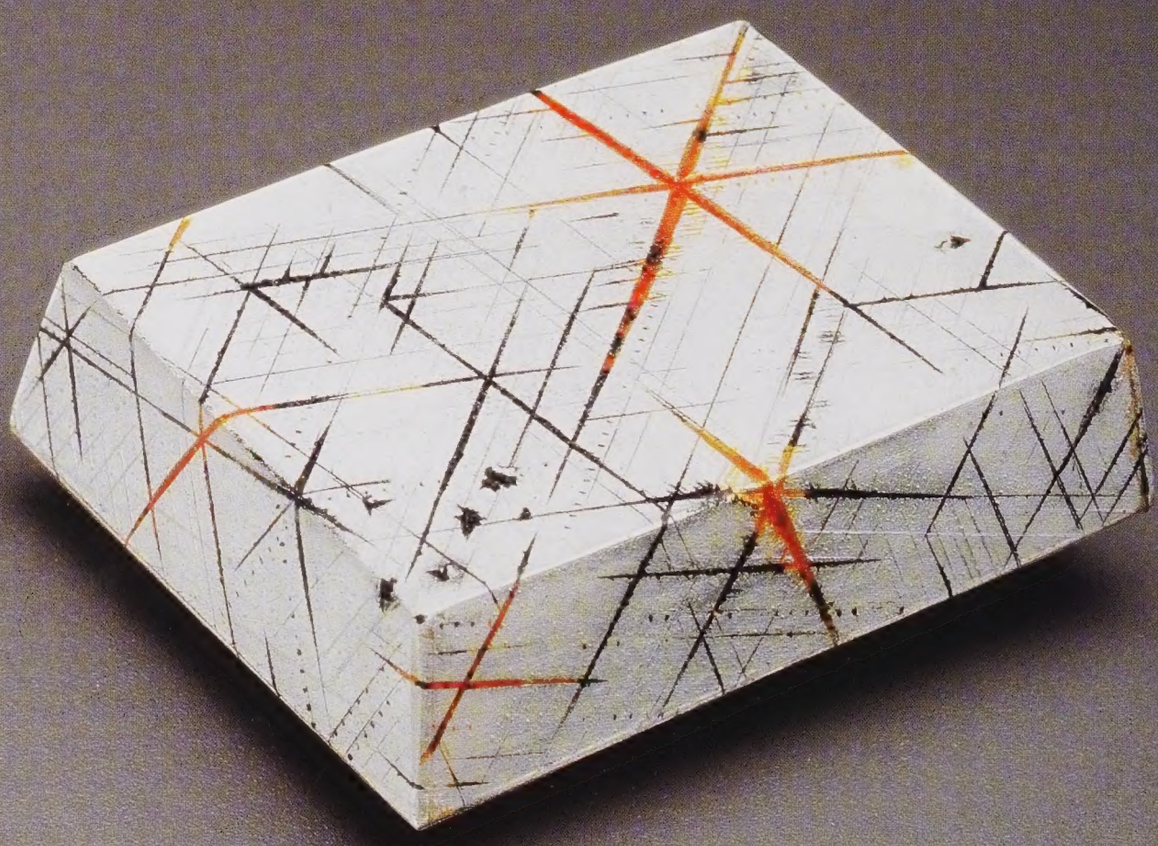
Winterstorm (brooch), 1999
enamel, sterling silver
$1\,3/4 \times 1\,3/4 \times 1/8$"
Photo: Marty Doyle

Nest (brooch), 1999
enamel, sterling silver
$1\,3/4 \times 1\,3/4 \times 1/8$"
Photo: Marty Doyle



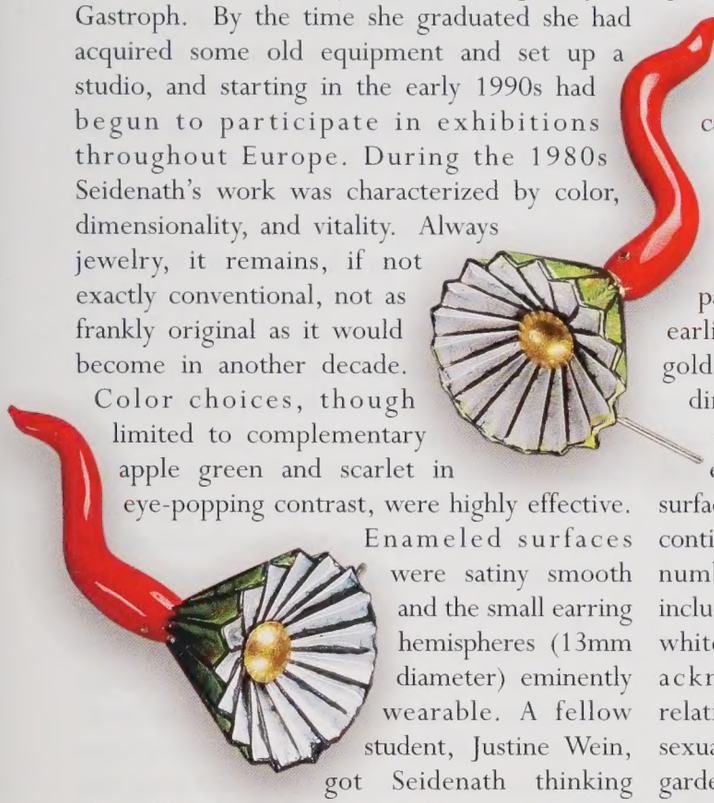
Thicket (brooch), 2000
enamel, sterling silver, diamonds, niello
$1\,1/2 \times 1\,1/2 \times 1/8$"
Photo: Marty Doyle

Crystalline II (brooch), 2001
enamel, sterling silver
$1\,1/2 \times 1\,3/8 \times 3/8$"
Photo: Marty Doyle



visits from noted German jewelry faculty.

While still in graduate school, Seidenath developed a production line and for several years maintained G&S Designs with colleague Lydia Gastroph. By the time she graduated she had acquired some old equipment and set up a studio, and starting in the early 1990s had begun to participate in exhibitions throughout Europe. During the 1980s Seidenath's work was characterized by color, dimensionality, and vitality. Always jewelry, it remains, if not exactly conventional, not as frankly original as it would become in another decade.



Color choices, though limited to complementary apple green and scarlet in eye-popping contrast, were highly effective. Enameled surfaces were satiny smooth and the small earring hemispheres (13mm diameter) eminently wearable. A fellow student, Justine Wein, got Seidenath thinking about folding the metal and then enameling it. Wein didn't always make finished pieces; many remained as sketches that had been assembled into three dimensions. But Seidenath loved her aesthetic and her irreverent approach to enamel. As anyone who has ever made a paper fan knows, folding is a way of stabilizing a thin, light material. Particularly for enamelists, folding metal foil for strength and avoiding solder (enamel doesn't flow over solder) is an excellent solution to the problem of weight. To this day Seidenath's folded enamel jewelry retains a freshness and apparent spontaneity all the more remarkable because of enamel's finicky qualities.

Consistent with her early explorations, Seidenath's thematic choices have remained rooted in nature, including the sexual foundation of all life forms. Cognizant of the symbolism of placing jewelry directly on the body, or in the case of pierced earrings, through the body, Seidenath references some of the methods nature uses to attract attention: form, color, movement. For years she consciously choose "abstracted references to organic forms, ambiguous erotic symbols as well as a palette of bold colors." Seidenath updates the long history of floral jewelry subjects with three-dimensional forms created by traditional metalsmithing techniques. A pair of earrings from 1991 titled *Wurzelblute*, roughly translated as "flower emerging from root," indeed resembles white daisies emerging from glowing, twisting red roots. There is not so much an attempt to realistically portray the sprouting bloom (being underground, the root would be more likely to be white), as to suggest a burst of floral energy. In another pair of enameled earrings from 1993, called *Rosengartlein*, a green field or lawn dotted with carved coral roses, tube-set diamonds, and white pearls is bezeled by a gold picket fence. These are dense little tableaux, with a characteristic limited palette of the same red and green used in the earliest enameled work, but the refined goldsmithing technique and the three-dimensionality of the roses tweaks their sentimental subject matter. Decorative elements are not normally attached to the surface of the enameled form, and Seidenath has continued to embellish the surface through a number of thematic and palette changes, including moving from intense color to black and white, and eventually back to color. She acknowledges multiple aspects of our relationship to nature, from the generative sexuality of the budding shoot, to the mannered garden that shows the controlling intervention of human cultivation.

Wurzelblute (ear decoration), 1991
enamel, coral, 18k gold
2 1/4 x 5/8 x 5/8"
Photo: Jochen Grun

Seidenath updates the long history of floral jewelry subjects with three-dimensional forms created by traditional metalsmithing techniques.

Seidenath was invited to participate in a show at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center in Staten Island, New York, that opened in 1992. The original theme was to be "virgins" but that was considered to be too controversial, so the exhibition was eventually called "Neoteric Jewelry." Seidenath's contribution concerned the Virgin Mary. She wanted to make reference to the lily, Mary's botanical symbol, and she used the opportunity to continue her exploration of folding, not overlooking an enfolded female archetype. Her pleated earrings, titled *The Virgin*, are deliciously rude, and although they are lily-white, they are so sexually suggestive that they do not immediately call to mind the mother of Jesus.

Beans (ear decoration), 1999
enamel, coral beads, pearls, sterling silver
1/2 x 1 x 1/8"
Photo: Marty Doyle

The folded work may be considered to be the first evidence of Seidenath's originality. In general, enameled earrings are rare. Since the metal must be enameled on both sides to equalize stress, the repeated layers of enamel needed for good color coverage usually cause earrings to exceed an optimal weight. So not only are Seidenath's earrings a visual delight, to the enamel-literate they have the extra caché of being functional, decorative, and extremely light. She has used a lead-bearing white enamel that can become blue, green, turquoise, and magenta when fired again and again. The repeated firing burns out the enamel on the folds, so that they oxidize to a dark black, accentuating the inverted forms and suggesting individual petals. Although opaque, the same white can be somewhat transparent if applied with a deft touch and not overfired. The pink of the copper shows through and creates a mottled white-green which contrasts nicely with the gold and coral accents.

It is perhaps in this work that the influence of Seidenath's former employer, Ulrike Bahrs, is felt. Since the 1970s Bahrs's work has been characterized by surreal and cerebral compositions and constructions that employ a variety of materials in addition to precious metals, namely glass, stones, and cast objects. Seidenath chooses materials–coral, glass, pearls, and diamonds–that have emotional equivalence.

Seidenath describes her inspiration and intent: "In winter nature and fertility are dormant, the range of colors is muted and reduced, surroundings change. Raindrops turn into a white backdrop like a canvas and conceal familiar things with an obscuring cover."

But it is not always easy to spot an artist's direct influences. People who grow up to be artists look at art all the time, and the cultural environment plays a big part. As noted earlier, the legacy of the Blue Rider remained, and Seidenath was most taken with the use of color by such Blue Rider painters as A. Jawlenski and, most notably, Wassily Kandinsky. Seidenath also spent a lot of time learning to understand the work of Joseph Beuys; his drawings and use of materials contributed to the way she looked at the world as an artist. It is perhaps easier to see the impact of Jünger, with whom she has had a close relationship, or even Giampaolo Babbetto, the Italian goldsmith, whose simple geometric constructions in gold often bear a single bold color. To Jünger's great credit as a teacher and mentor, Seidenath's work has looked only like her own. Like a good director he has enabled her to do her best work, not his.

The most striking example of Seidenath's thematic and color trajectory is a series titled *Midnight Sun*, a group of brooches and earrings with a winter theme. The title is taken from a song by Johnny Mercer; the visuals came from "seeing beautiful abstracted patterns of winter landscape during a flight to Miami." Seidenath describes her inspiration and intent: "In winter nature and fertility are dormant, the range of colors is muted and reduced, surroundings change. Raindrops turn into a white backdrop like a canvas and conceal familiar things with an obscuring cover." She began with a square format, but conceptually the individual pieces are so much of a piece it doesn't matter which came first. Her intentions are fully realized in these evocative and haunting pieces. As the work develops over time, the early designs seem tentative when compared to later iterations. Of course they're not really timid, but as the series progresses the mark-making gains in assuredness. By the end the frame has been reduced to the absolute minimum, just enough to hold the enameled element onto the pin back. The powerfully drawn marks supersede technique, and the fact that they are enameled and not drawn gives them depth. One way of describing the work's evolution is to say that the first generation is like frost on a window, while the later ones resemble a pond where the ice is cracked and water is black beneath the cracks. Like mature artists from Beethoven to Bergman, the work becomes more succinct as it evolves.

Even the earliest brooches and earrings in this series are unlike any other work extant. Partly this is due to the enameling techniques used. Drawings are engraved into the surface before enameling. The surface is then stoned back to flat and layers of transparent enamel are applied, giving back an icy sparkle without using gold. Much information is imparted in these tiny compositions. There is a glimpse of snow with a few scattered diamonds framed by geometric bezels with jagged edges, as if large chunks of ice have broken off. The surfaces are mostly white, the fine silver showing through, broken by a few straight lines. Over time, the lines become more dominant and the underbelly of inhospitable black water is revealed. *Winterstorm* and *Nest* are like charcoal drawings of a maelstrom just barely contained by the most minimal of frames. In the strong frameless black and white drawings, enamel comes closest to its painterly counterpart, again without the distraction of color. All the associations with glass, fragility, even the slang term "ice" for diamonds, spring to mind. The intimate size draws the eye right in, as the fine layers of glass have trapped lines like

silt in ice. Occasional use of the frame moves the viewer in and out of the image; contained in a substantial bezel, the brooches and earrings bear heavier black marks, as if the fissures in the ice were growing. A common European construction is to bezel from behind, so that the front contains a solid frame. This has the effect of framing the composition like a painting, and not treating the enameled element as a jewel, as is more commonly done. It's an interesting craft-ly distinction. When the same ideas are executed graphically in silver and niello, the dimensionality possible with enamel is missing.

Although they are all part of the same series, individual pieces have names, such as *Thicket, Crowfeet, Winterpond, Ice Shard, Thorny*. They share evocation of nature and seasonal repose, with only the dim possibility of rebirth in occasional lines of green, yellow, or red, as if the new shoots can barely penetrate the carpet of snow. A threatening winter sky hangs over them. They are not a sentimentalized winter wonderland of jingling sleigh bells, but the persistent ice, cold, and black limbs of barren silhouetted shrubs. It's a reminder of how much can be communicated with line only. Nonetheless, the addition of color, when it does arrive, comes as a welcome intruder. Like a prism the light has broken up into its component colors, with shards thrown off in various directions. All in all, Seidenath's judicious use of color shows remarkable restraint. Too often, enamelists are seduced by brilliant color and sparkly transparency, set off by garish gold cloisonné wires or bezeling. But Seidenath shows her allegiance to form and design by concentrating on a few complementary colors and in the simplicity of black and white. In her early work, she threw a cloak of vivid color on and into her fully dimensional constructions. Then, in the winter series, she has withheld the easy allure of colored glass and dealt with linear suggestion of movement and stasis, in a contained format.

During the early years, Seidenath worked only in opaque enamels, claiming she didn't know how to use transparents. Since enameling is inherently challenging–one doesn't even get the same result from the same color each time it is fired–she set herself strong limitations in working with color, for example, just red and green, or later, just black and white; opaque enamel was fired over copper. The winter series, using transparents, however, was fired on fine silver, so that there would be no wrong colors. "Then I started using transparent colors all the time," says Seidenath. "Slowly I added reds, blues. Then I became too comfortable with the format and I didn't want to rely on it or on the same shapes. So I began to break out of the two-dimensional format." Seidenath began to make three-dimensional paper models, scoring and folding the metal structure under the enamel.

After several years of looking into frozen water, reflecting and refracting light, Seidenath is ready to begin to move away from the strictly organic and go with abstraction. Most of the "winter" pieces are brooches because the notion of framing the composition like a canvas seemed better suited to the object's placement on clothing, rather than on skin. Seidenath wanted that bit of distance. In the earlier years, when the subject matter was more frankly erotic, it was important for the work to be located directly on the body. As the imagery has become more abstracted it has moved away from the body. Now the geometrically folded rectangles are even less organic and appear, like shaped canvases, to jut out from the wall.

Seidenath's latest work is again small in size and intimate in subject, yet bold and joyful in execution. In addition to the subtle surface of the folded boxlike brooches, there are earrings that are colorful, witty, and feminine. The palette for each pair is still confined to one or two colors, but oh! the surfaces. She takes a conventional format–turquoise beads, pearls, gold prongs on an enameled disk–and creates a simple and boldly confident arrangement. Rimmed in turquoise or sunny orange beads, the mottled blue enameled surface is not the icy transparency of a winter pond, but a granular translucent frosting of dyed sugar barely fused to the surface. They are as delectable as the witch's house was to Hansel and Gretel. Putting them on would be like breaking the frozen surface and seeing the sun burst through again. ■

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer.

[1] In addition to the Dutch designers, in Pforzheim, the other German center of goldsmithing, Claus Bury and Jens-Rudiger Lorenzen were also breaking boundaries in design and materials.

[2] Tangentially, metalsmith Boris Bally has described his Swiss apprenticeship in similar terms. He was given an item to fabricate, with only a detailed sketch and without instruction, and at the end of the day (in reality several days) if it wasn't acceptable, it would be cast into a reject box and he would be asked to start over the next day. The only explanation given was, "It isn't right yet."

All unattributed quotes taken from communication with the artist.

For background on contemporary German jewelers mentioned, see *Münchner Goldschmiede. Schmuck und Geäat,* exhibition catalogue, (Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1993), and Peter Dormer and Ralph Turner, *the new jewelry: trends + traditions*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985).

Arline Fisch
Halter and Skirt, 1968
sterling silver, printed velvet
Collection of American Craft Museum, New York

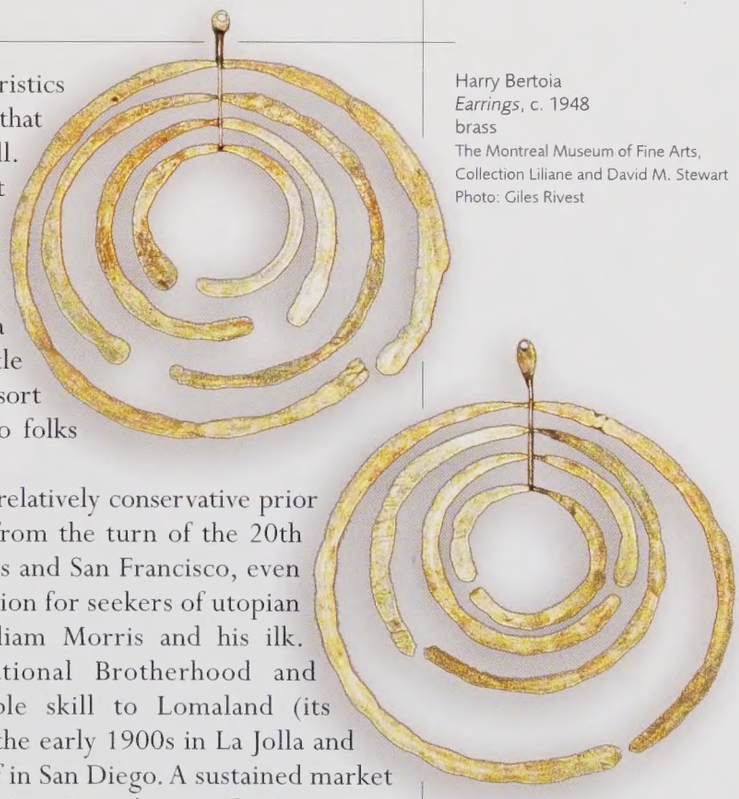
This is the second article in a two-part series exploring modernist jewelers in Southern California. The first,"California Dreamin': Modernist Jewelers in Los Angeles, 1940-1970," was published in the Winter 2002 issue of *Metalsmith*.

Tea and Jewelry

Modernist Metalsmithing in San Diego, 1940–1970

by Toni Greenbaum

San Diego, San Diego,
Beautiful San Diego!
All your ailments disappear,
Husky guys are living here.
Here long life is all the rage,
When we die 'twill be old age.
When we came we felt like hell;
Now thank God, we're feeling well!
All together! Cheer like hell,
For San Diego![1]



Harry Bertoia
Earrings, c. 1948
brass
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,
Collection Liliane and David M. Stewart
Photo: Giles Rivest

Just as environmental, social, political, and cultural characteristics vary throughout the entire state of California, it is equally true that each region of Southern California differs from the others as well. In the mid-20th century Los Angeles County was more prominent than San Diego, boasting impressive institutions of higher learning like UCLA and USC, elegant shops such as those on Rodeo Drive and, of course, the unprecedented glamour of Hollywood. San Diego, in comparison, despite, or, perhaps, as a result of its remarkable climate, was somewhat of a "sleepy" little town. It attracted those seeking healthful living, functioned as a resort area, and provided a haven for wealthy retirees and a home to folks stationed at its naval base.

Although San Diego possessed a viable art community, it was relatively conservative prior to World War II. The progressive Arts and Crafts movement from the turn of the 20th century failed to shake things up there, as it had in Los Angeles and San Francisco, even though, since the late 19th century, the city had been a destination for seekers of utopian ideals like those espoused by British theorist-designer William Morris and his ilk. Although such communal organizations as the International Brotherhood and Theosophical Society[2] attracted craftspeople of considerable skill to Lomaland (its headquarters) and several fine craftsmen homes were built in the early 1900s in La Jolla and Grossmont, the Arts and Crafts movement never really took off in San Diego. A sustained market failed to develop for arts and crafts objects and, therefore, San Diego's contributions were limited in comparison with the rest of the state.[3] Arts and crafts metalwork, in particular, was almost nonexistent in San Diego, except for J. Jessop and Sons, Jewelers, who operated as a retail

establishment and carried some jewelry in the Arts and Crafts style by Anna Valentien. Consequently, due to a lack of role models, as well as technical schools, craftspeople in San Diego in the 1940s had to start from scratch.

Luckily, during World War II, artists and architects poured into the San Diego area to fill war-related jobs. Many of them were young idealists, with visions of using the arts to enhance San Diego's growth.[4] Around 1945, local architect Lloyd Ruocco led a multidisciplinary group of arts professionals to found the Allied Artists Council. In 1947 Ruocco's wife, Ilse, chaired a forum whose purpose was to create a craft-oriented offshoot of the organization, to be called Allied Craftsmen of San Diego. Founded as an independent local organization, its mandate was to foster cooperation and growth amongst both traditional and "experimental" makers, and to stimulate interest and appreciation of contemporary crafts within the community, through at least two exhibition/sales per year of pieces that incorporated "esthetic, functional and educational value."[5]

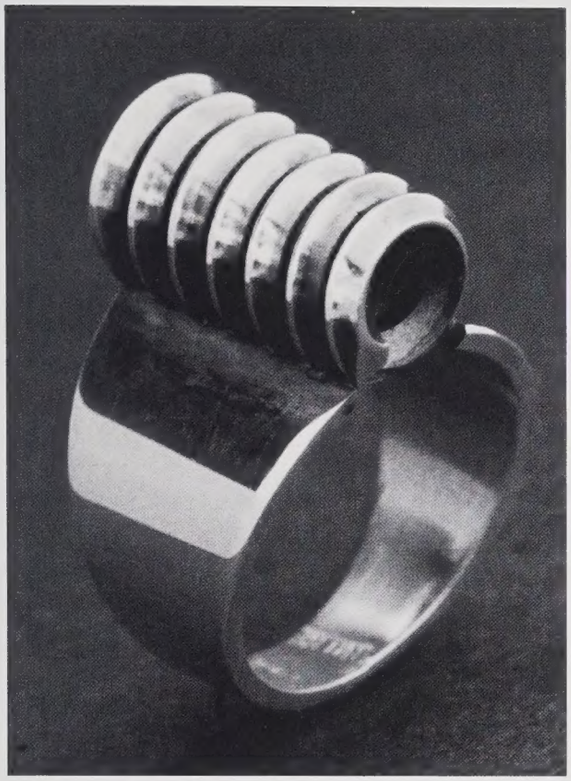
Bertoia stated that the prospect of working with the Eameses "...was one reason I went to the West Coast. Another was not to be cold and wet."

Allied Craftsmen's first members' exhibition was held in May 1947 at San Diego State College. Jewelry was always an important part of the semi-annual shows, held in the spring and fall.[6] In fact, all of the documented jewelry activity in San Diego at that time was shown through Allied Craftsmen, a catalyst of immense importance, although there were fewer than a dozen members then, in all. Allied Craftsmen exhibited work by California craftspeople outside of the San Diego area as well, including jewelers Ray Hein, Esther Lewittes, Everett MacDonald, and Alvin Pine from Los Angeles County.[7]

The most eminent jeweler to become a member of the organization just after World War II was Harry Bertoia. He first participated in the spring of 1948, at the Allied Craftsmen exhibition held at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery, then located within the Sunset Art Gallery in Mission Hills. The organization took great pride in Bertoia's inclusion, as he was a "nationally recognized silversmith and designer...whose work [had] recently been featured in ...*Fortune* and *Arts and Architecture*."[8] Bertoia had originally moved to California in 1943, after the metals department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where he had been teaching, closed due to wartime restrictions on strategic materials. He joined Charles and Ray Eames, friends from Cranbrook, at their Venice, California, studio to work on molded and laminated plywood furniture.[9] Bertoia stated that the prospect of working with the Eameses "...was one reason I went to the West Coast. Another was not to be cold and wet."[10] Things, however, did not work out as planned. In 1947, after an acrimonious parting from the Eamses,[11] Bertoia moved to San Diego, where he took a job at the United States Naval Electronics Laboratory.

To enable him to also work independently, Bertoia rented studio space across the Bay from an area then known as the "flatlands."[12] He probably continued to execute designs for his signature woven metal wire chairs, later produced by Knoll International, during his term there.[13] However, Bertoia's primary occupation while in San Diego was jewelry making. He showed "silvercast, woven and percussive (?) [jewelry]–combined with ebony [or silk]" in the spring 1948 Allied Craftsmen show at the Sunset Art Gallery,[14] and he continued to make mobile-like jewelry in brass as well as silver. Bertoia then moved to Pennsylvania in 1950 to pursue his designs for woven metal chairs with Knoll. He left San Diego with great misgivings, due to his genuine love for the Pacific Coast.[15] Bertoia, however, continued to show with Allied Craftsmen until 1952.

In addition to being sales events, Allied Craftsmen exhibitions functioned as social affairs, where "teas" and the occasional "salad luncheon" were offered as a prelude to the shows, held either at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery or Spanish Village Art Center, both located in Balboa Park.[16] During its formative years, many members of Allied Craftsmen were women. They were also homemakers, and launching the exhibitions with a social event was most compatible with San Diego's congenial atmosphere. In addition, each spring the members sold painted Easter eggs to raise money for their public programs and exhibitions fund. The local newspapers, furthermore, published reviews of the social events, along with the host arrangements surrounding critiques and lectures by guest celebrities such as ceramist Peter Voulkos. All of the members participated, both as caterers (wives of male members "poured") and as table setting and installation designers. Exhibitions often revolved around themes. The spring 1952 show, for example, used natural phenomena by setting the work against beach rocks, succulent plants, and tree bark. "Roots of the Past" was the motif of the spring 1959 show. Allied Craftsmen borrowed antique textiles,



ceramics and jewelry from local museums and private collections to exhibit alongside the contemporary works.

Jeweler-enamelist Barney Reid, an all-around craftsman equally comfortable making ceramic or wooden vessels and screen-printed textiles as well as jewelry, designed the spring 1951 exhibition with sculptor John Osgood. Held at the Fine Arts Gallery, the exhibition was described by a local newspaper: "The entire space...has been treated as still life or...mobile sculpture built with the various exhibition pieces."[17] Reid, who shared a studio with Bertoia while the latter lived in San Diego,[18] began showing jewelry with Allied Craftsmen in 1951. That same year, he won second prize for jewelry at the San Diego County Fair. However, he also showed nationally, receiving an honorable mention for jewelry in the Wichita Art Association's Decorative Art Ceramics Exhibition in 1953, the same year he became president of Allied Craftsmen.

In 1955 Reid participated in "American Jewelry and Related Objects," a traveling exhibition organized by the Huntington Galleries, in Huntington, West Virginia, and in the landmark jewelry exhibition in print, published in *Design Quarterly*, by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. In the Walker exhibit, he showed an enamel, silver, and ebony pendant, depicting an enchanting Miro-like creature frontally gliding through the stratosphere. Reid was included in the 1956 inaugural exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City, "Craftsmanship in a Changing World," and was invited to submit work for consideration in the American Pavilion of the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels.

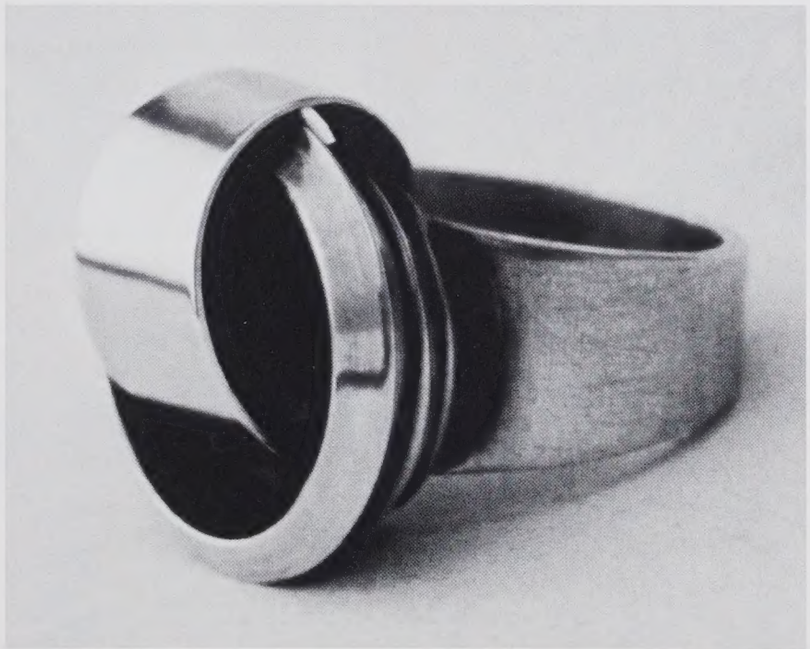
In the early 1960s Reid turned to sculpture, which he fabricated from enameled copper and brass panels arranged in flowerlike formats atop attenuated brass stalks, reminiscent of Bertoia's sound sculptures from the same period. Reid died in 1992 at the age of 79, and even though throughout his career he sold at "smart" shops in La Jolla, Palm Springs, and Beverly Hills, in addition to Allied Craftsmen shows, he remained relatively unknown for such a capable and prolific artist.

Another jeweler relegated to almost total obscurity until very recently–when his remarkable jewelry was "discovered" on eBay, the online auction source–was James Parker. Born in 1914, Parker made his living as a high school English teacher. He began teaching at Grossmont High School in 1941, where, besides teaching English, he purportedly also taught classes in art, general crafts, ceramics, and photography. Parker was mostly a self-taught jeweler, having attended only evening adult education classes in jewelry-making. He specialized in rings, and many of them are among the most eccentric pieces to emerge from the modernist jewelry movement.

James Parker
Ring, ca. 1950
sterling silver

Parker won many prizes. In 1951 he received first honors in the jewelry classification at the San Diego County Fair, as well as first prize for a "single piece of jewelry with stone" at the California State Fair Art Show. Margaret de Patta, the renowned San Francisco modernist jeweler and guru to many others in Northern California,[19] evidently influenced Parker as well. Some of his rings are decidedly constructivist–very like de Patta's–displaying similar solutions to the challenges posed by dynamic structuring of three-dimensional forms in space. Unlike de

James Parker
Ring, ca. 1950
sterling silver



Ruth Radakovich
Ring, ca. 1970
gold, topaz.

Svetozar Radakovich
Ring, ca. 1970
gold

Patta, however, Parker often used enamel as well as stones. He is known, furthermore, not only as a maker but also a collector of works in enamel. His stellar collection, which is mainly composed of his own jewelry, along with plates and jewelry by Ellamarie and Jackson Woolley, also of San Diego,[20] also includes pieces by Barney Reid, Hazel Bray of San Francisco, and David Andersen of Norway, among others. After Parker's death in 1987, the entire collection was donated to the Wichita Art Association (renamed Wichita Center for the Arts in 1991), an organization long committed to enamel's connoisseurship.

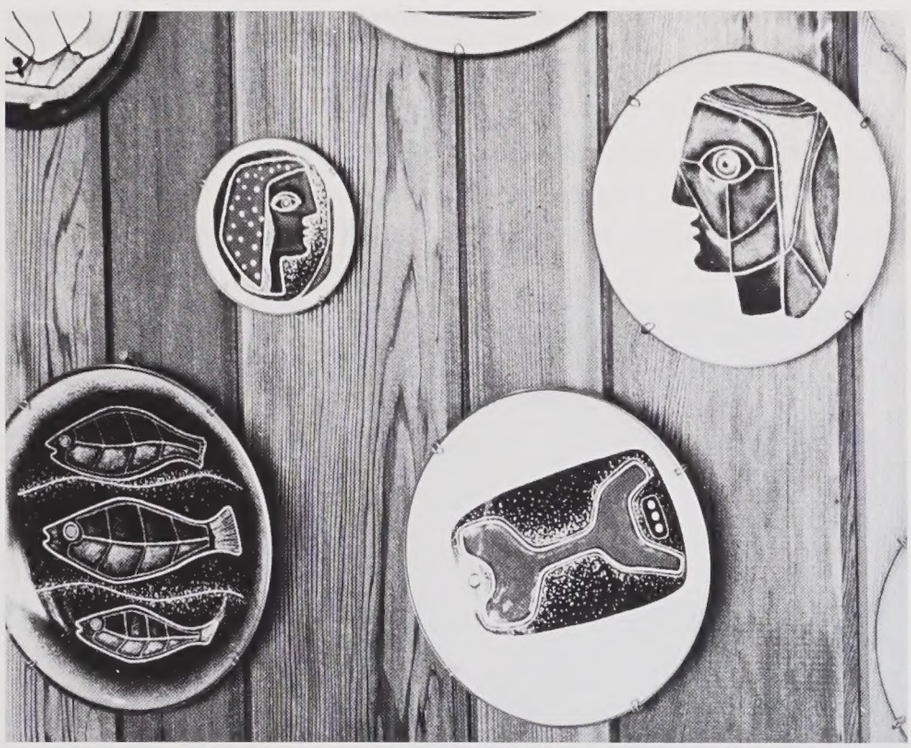
James Parker
Necklace, 1968
enamel, sterling silver

Parker was very active in Allied Craftsmen from 1951, when he was its president, until the 1970s. Like Barney Reid, he was invited to submit work for consideration in the Brussels World's Fair and was represented in "Craftsmanship in a Changing World." A unique two-sided pendant, characterized by nine enamel plaques suspended like curtains within a silver frame, was acquired by the Oakland Museum in 1967. In 1968 Parker showed a necklace of 16 white enameled silver nuggets in "California Design Ten," part of the landmark series of exhibitions held at the Pasadena Art Museum.[21]

Several early Allied Craftsmen members made jewelry as an adjunct to activity in other mediums. Primarily an object maker, Fennell Wallen, who had studied art and engineering at San Diego State College, began showing with the organization in 1952. He specialized in jewelry made from carved desert ironwood (one of the hardest and densest of all woods) and silver wire. In 1955 Wallen participated in "American Jewelry and Related Objects" and *Design Quarterly's* special jewelry issue. He showed a "two-level ring" in the Allied Craftsmen exhibition in 1972. Wallen apparently was still making jewelry as late as four years ago, when he showed modernist jeweler Marcia Chamberlain "several pieces of square chunky jewelry" he had just completed.[22]

Modernist jewelry blossomed in the San Diego area in the 1960s. Three artists, Svetozar (Toza) Radakovich, Ruth Clark Radakovich, and Arline Fisch, are largely responsible. Toza and Ruth Radakovich met in Belgrade, Yugoslavia (Toza's birthplace), in 1918, just after World War II had ended. They were both working for the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), he as an artist, she as a secretary. Ruth, an American from Chicago, had studied painting and metalsmithing in the United States before going to Europe. In 1955, after a whirlwind romance and marriage set amid the turmoil of international postwar politics, the couple came to the United States. They settled in Rochester, New York, where Toza taught fine art and design at the School for American Craftsmen at Rochester Institute of Technology; they both studied metalsmithing there as well.[23] In 1958 Toza taught metalsmithing at the Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, just before he and Ruth moved to Encinitas, California in 1959. They both began showing with Allied Craftsmen that same year.

The couple, who worked side by side on their own individual projects, constantly engaged each other in aesthetic and technical dialogues.[24] In addition to jewelry, they both did large-scale, architecturally oriented sculptures such as windows, doors, and even children's playground equipment in a variety of materials, including wood, stained glass, and plastics. They achieved positions of stature within the art community, not only in San Diego but nationally and even abroad. Their work was exhibited in the American Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair. They received the gold medal at "Form and Quality" in 1964 at the Munich International Trade Fair, and in 1969 they were included in "Objects USA: The Johnson Collection of

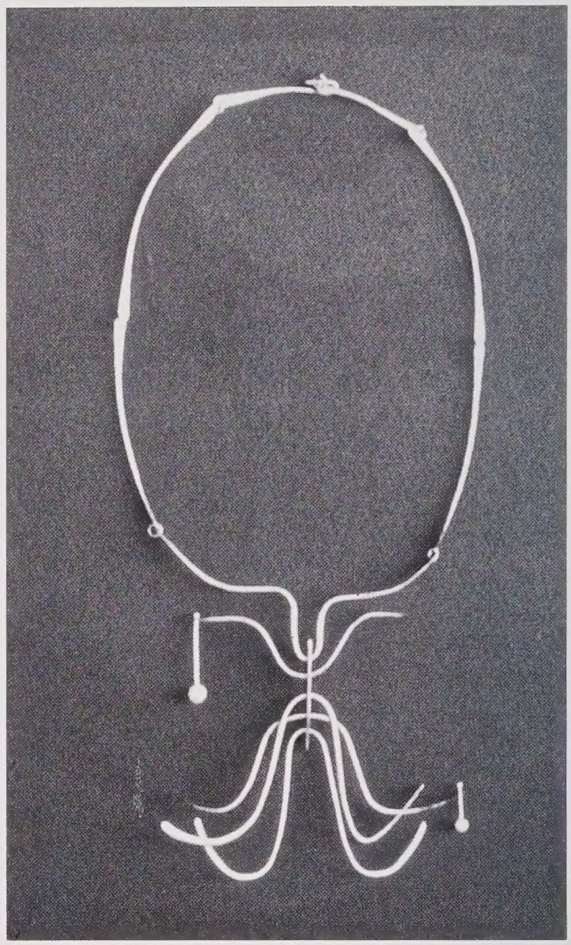


Ellemarie and Jackson Woolley
Plates, 1950s
enamel on copper
(displayed hanging on the wall of James Parker's home)

American Crafts," which traveled to several museums in the United States.

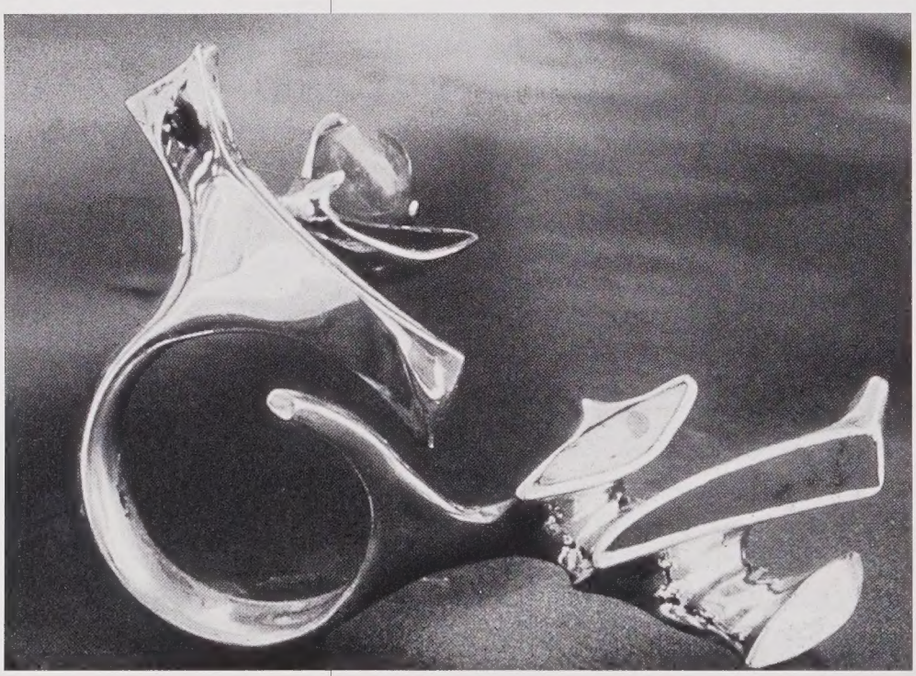
The Radakoviches' jewelry was large and three-dimensional. Ruth, however, was more interested in wearability than Toza, whose primary focus was sculptural presence, independent of the body. The physical world was, nonetheless, the source of inspiration for both, although Ruth worked more instinctively and emotionally, whereas Toza was more analytical–distancing himself from the subject, then disassembling it and rearranging the elements into a wholly new format.[25] It is hard to know for certain whether Ruth influenced James Parker or vice versa, but rings by both share a similar quest for fantastical imagery; for example, those that flaunt bizarre stalk- or bud-like protuberances emanating from huge, dramatically detailed hemispheres attached to the shanks.

In 1960, Toza began teaching at San Diego State University (SDSU), where he established a course in bronze casting. He and Ruth had two-person exhibitions at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art that year and the Pasadena Art Museum and La Jolla Art Center in 1962. Ruth died in 1975. In 1980 Toza was given a major jewelry retrospective at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art; and in 1985 he was designated a "Living Treasure of California." He died in Encinitas in 1998.



Genny K. Brown
Necklace, 1968
sterling silver, pearls

Arline Fisch perceived jewelry, in fact, "not as abstract decoration to be hung *on* the body, but as a source of integral adornment...like...body tattooing,...the intricate scarification patterns on...African bush people, or...the highly ornate... jewelry that covers Middle Eastern belly dancers." [emphasis added]



Jack Rogers Hopkins
Hand Sculpture for 2 Fingers, 1968
gold, ivory, Mexican fire opal

Another "Living Treasure of California" is Arline Fisch, who is best known for creating jewelry from knitted metal wire. But before she developed that methodology, Arline made jewelry using traditional processes, such as hammering, repousée, chasing, and soldering. Like Toza and Ruth Radakovich, Arline studied silversmithing in Copenhagen, on a Fulbright Grant in 1956. After teaching at Skidmore College, she settled in San Diego, where she became a professor of art at SDSU in 1961. The number of students and young jewelers that Arline Fisch has mentored through her long career is incalculable. She first showed with Allied Craftsmen in 1963, and in 1964–65 she served as its president.

Fisch was one of a small contingent of avant-garde jewelers in the late 1960s who viewed jewelry as "one" with the body, often combining metal with fabric. She perceived jewelry, in fact, "not as abstract decoration to be hung *on* the body, but as a source of integral adornment...like...body tattooing,...the intricate scarification patterns on...African bush people, or...the highly ornate...jewelry that covers Middle Eastern belly dancers." [emphasis added][26]

Over the years Fisch has become an icon. She has shown in more international exhibitions and is included in more permanent collections than any other American artist-jeweler. She wrote the standard text, *Textile Techniques in Metal*, in 1975

(second edition, 1995), based upon her investigations into the processes. "Elegant Fantasy: The Jewelry of Arline Fisch," a major retrospective organized by the San Diego Historical Society in 2000, is currently traveling.

Due to the stunning performances of James Parker, Toza and Ruth Radakovich, and Arline Fisch, a watershed jewelry community has developed in San Diego. Much of the early enthusiasm centered on enamels, but as the movement expanded other techniques made their mark as well. Jack Rogers Hopkins, an assistant professor of art at California State College in San Diego who first showed with Allied Craftsmen in 1963, made exceptional cast jewelry in the 1960s and '70s before turning to furniture. *Hand Sculpture for 2 Fingers* was in "California Design Ten." Also included in that exhibition was a striking forged sterling silver necklace with pearls by Genny K. Brown, who showed with Allied Craftsmen in 1967.

Jewelry activity in San Diego has continued uninterrupted until the present day, arguably eclipsing that of Los Angeles. The movement may have begun a bit later in San Diego than in Los Angeles and certainly San Francisco; however, the outstanding achievements by particular individuals, as well as the influential program at SDSU, cannot be overstated. Under the tutelage of master metalsmiths such as Helen Shirk and Harlan Butt, the program has continued to train fine jewelers to this day.

Although postwar metalsmithing was active and original in Southern California, makers from the northern parts of the state have historically received more exposure. The story of 20th-century jewelry in Southern California is, nevertheless, extremely rich and varied. "Southern California *is* California, only more so; ...a prodigious place where *biggest* and *greatest* are common adjectives; ...all characteristics of California are exaggerated here."[27] All in all, the impact of Southern California makers on the entire modernist jewelry movement, and its heirs is increasingly evident. ■

Toni Greenbaum is a New York City–based art historian, specializing in 20th-century jewelry and metalwork.

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1 Excerpted from "Lung Land–An Ode to Los Angeles" by Humphrey J. Stewart, official organist for the Panama–California Exposition of 1915, in Kenneth R. Trapp, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life* (Oakland: The Oakland Museum, 1993), p. 205.
2 The society was founded in 1897 on Point Loma. It moved to Los Angeles in 1942, due to unfavorable changes in the property tax laws.
3 Bruce Kamerling, "The Arts and Crafts Movement in San Diego," in Trapp, p. 231.
4 "Allied Artists Council 1945-1947," unpaginated typescript, San Diego Historical Society (SDHS) Research Archives.
5 Margaret Price and Marg Loring, "Former Craft Group of the Allied Artists Council 1950," unpaginated typescript of rough preliminary draft of mandate, 1949-50, SDHS Research Archives.
6 Allied Craftsmen also maintained a permanent showcase, open Saturday and Sunday afternoon, in the Spanish Village Art Center, Balboa Park. The Spanish Village Art Center was composed of studios occupied by individual makers. Several early Allied Craftsmen events were held at the studio of founding president Margaret Price.
7 See Toni Greenbaum, "California Dreamin': Modernist Jewelry in Los Angeles, 1940-1970," *Metalsmith*, Winter 2002.
8 Cushing, "Tete-a-Tete," *San Diego Union*, May 10, 1948.
9 Bertoia, in fact, made Ray Eames's gold wedding ring for her marriage to Charles in 1941. cf. John Neuhart and Marilyn Neuhart, *Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 25.
10 Eric Larrabee and Massimo Vignelli, *Knoll Design* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981), p. 68.
11 Already bitterly disappointed with their collaborative efforts—Bertoia being more interested in metal's potential for furniture and less in molded plywood—Bertoia left the Eameses in 1946, after not receiving promised credit for his design contributions to chairs exhibited at the Eames retrospective held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. *cf.* Larrabee and Vignelli, p. 69.
12 Also referred to as "Dutch flats," this area was located at the bottom of the hill, adjacent to Charles Lindbergh Airport. During World War II it hosted factories, which manufactured airplane parts, beneath a camouflage of chicken feather-coated wire mesh. cf. David Tisdale, interview by Toni Greenbaum, November 14, 2001.
13 Marcia Chamberlain, interview by Toni Greenbaum, April 15, 2001.
14 Ibid., Cushing, "Tete-a-Tete."
15 Larrabee and Vignelli, p. 69.
16 The San Diego Fine Arts Gallery relocated to Balboa Park in 1949.
17 Edith Cushing, "Allied Craftsmen Plan Tea, Show in Gallery," *San Diego Union*, May 13, 1951.
18 Marcia Chamberlain, interview by Toni Greenbaum.
19 See *The Jewelry of Margaret de Patta: A Retrospective Exhibition*, (Oakland, CA: exhibition catalogue, The Oakes Gallery, The Oakland Museum, 1976).
20 Nationally recognized, the Woolleys were primarily object makers. They did, however, make some jewelry. The Allied Craftsmen catalogue from 1951 lists four Woolley enamel on copper pendants.
21 See Toni Greenbaum, "California Dreamin': Modernist Jewelers in Los Angeles, 1940-1970," for an account.
22 Marcia Chamberlain, interview by Toni Greenbaum. According to enamelist JoAnn Tanzer, interviewed by Toni Greenbaum, December 16, 2001, Wallen has since died.
23 In the early 1950s, prior to coming to the United States, the Radakoviches had studied metalsmithing with Mögens Björn-Andersen in Copenhagen.
24 Jeannie Radakovich (daughter), interview by Toni Greenbaum, August 10, 1998.
25 Marilyn Hagberg, "The Flying Radakoviches," *San Diego* magazine, May 1969, p. 63.
26 "Arline Fisch, The Egg & The Eye," *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1969.
27 Philip L. Fradkin, *The Seven States of California, A Natural and Human History* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1995), p. 318.

Sharon Church
Commemorative Brooch for a Bleeding Heart, 2000
carved and dyed Cuban mahogany, old European cut diamonds, oxidized sterling silver
$2\,3/4 \times 2\,3/4 \times 3/4"$
Worn by the work's owner, Jane Sullivan.
Photo: Thomas Brummett

Embodied Sympathy

by Bruce Metcalf

In 1964, while looking at some of Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*, critic Arthur C. Danto was struck by the fact that it was difficult to tell certain artworks apart from real things. Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* had no important visual distinction from the kind of Brillo box one might find in a grocery store, so it followed that one couldn't tell art from nonart simply by looking at it anymore. As a philosopher, Danto found this an intriguing problem that demanded a whole new way of defining art. In his 1981 book, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, he offered his definition. Put succinctly, Danto says that art is embodied meaning.

Pat Flynn
Two Dots, 1983
sterling silver, 14k gold, and nickel
$1\ 1/4 \times 1\ 1/4$"
Worn by the work's owner, Patricia Le Foll.
Photo: Bruce Metcalf

Danto's thesis is actually a great deal more complicated, but the phrase makes a nice slogan, and it's a useful way to look at the art of the 20th century. In this article, I propose an addendum to Danto's thesis, one that applies to craft. My proposal is this: There is a certain kind of craft that is embodied sympathy.

* * * * *

I have been giving brooches and necklaces to my wife Patricia since 1994, and she now has a modest collection of works by Robert Ebendorf, Jan Yager, Donald Friedlich, and other well-known jewelers. A few years ago, I started looking for a good, well-designed piece of jewelry that would clearly express love.

Of course, any gift could conceivably do the job. In that sense, a Mixmaster or a new car–or a print or a painting–might stand as a love token. But the problem is that any old gift wouldn't speak in a public language, and a bystander wouldn't necessarily understand that Patricia was, indeed, the object of someone's affection. What I wanted was a public declaration, visible and easy to interpret. But it was as if serious artists–including jewelers–had unanimously decided that affection is not a proper subject for art. Almost all the studio jewelry I looked at was not "sentimental jewelry," in the sense of being specifically designed to proclaim love.

The genre was once commonplace, and there was a symbolic vocabulary for all the nuances of love. Ivy meant fidelity, pansies (in a pun on the French *pensée*) meant "I think of you," bees and fire spoke about the agony of unrequited love. But no more. Nearly the whole language for communicating emotion in jewelry is obsolete, almost lost. I guess that all those symbols were reclassified as decoration, which Modernists hated passionately. There's kitsch, of course, but I can't stand Hallmark® moments. The token of affection that I wanted was pretty damn hard to find.

Ultimately, I bought one of Pat Flynn's heart pins, the kind he produces by the dozens. And it was perfect. Patricia wears it often, and it says exactly what I wanted it to say. Now, nobody would claim that Flynn's heart pins are great works of art: they aren't. They are craft, made for the marketplace, without high ambitions. I had a fairly ordinary desire, but an urgent one, and it wasn't the flashy art jewelers that fulfilled it. Pat Flynn did the job. It made me wonder. What's happening when an inconspicuous pin does a better job at expressing feeling than art?

There's a certain kind of craftsperson who imagines what people need–especially in the psychological sense–and then, drawing from her own experience, makes objects that fulfill those

needs. If she's good, she will also consider design, color, and the rest of the formal components of art-making. She'll consider function, and no doubt she'll think about how well a given object might sell. But she'll keep one thing in mind at all times: how to make the experience of her work beneficial to others.

I think immediately of my friend Sharon Church. She sees jewelry as "the psychic armoring of the human form."[1] By this, Sharon does not mean providing weapons for social combat, but completing and preparing a person for any kind of social intercourse. She particularly likes an essay by cultural historian Ananda Coomaraswamy, in which he argues that ornamentation is far more than applying designs to the surface of an object. Coomaraswamy quotes ancient Vedic texts to show that ornament is a form of preparation that might solve practical requirements, but also answers to psychological (and even spiritual) needs. His example is a warrior who is "*alamkata*–fully equipped ... in mail and turban, and with bows and arrows and sword."[2] Of course, the weaponry is metaphorical, and Coomaraswamy's purpose is to make the reader consider what kind of equipment is truly required in life.

Church would respond that psychic armoring is complicated business. She starts by assuming our universal longing to be better than we are. Church's "mail and turban" are designed to satisfy some of those longings, so as to make women feel better about themselves. If a woman wearing jewelry feels more beautiful, she should also feel more confident. Church can equip women in other ways, too: she can make a woman appear seductive–*come hither*–or prickly–*keep away*! She can make portable icons, so a woman can project a suitable fiction (or truth) to those around her. She can make a shy woman into the center of attention. And thus, Church hopes, she can give form to inchoate aspirations: to be more beautiful, more competent, more connected. These, to Church, are the vital functions of adornment, even though none of them are even remotely physical. A woman wearing Sharon Church jewelry is intended to feel *alamkata*.

Church wears jewelry constantly–she even dressed up for our interview! She thinks about her sensual experiences with jewelry: what it was like to touch certain pieces, to wear them and heft them and hear their sound; what she felt like; how the people around her responded. And, I assume, she examines her own motives for wearing jewelry, and has felt all of those psychological needs herself. In a sense, she is her own case study, and her observations become her library and database.

But an artist's careful observation, by itself, means little. Church's experience must ultimately be transformed into objects. The crucial step is to imagine how another person feels, and to figure how those feelings can be altered through contact or use of an object. To do so, she must imaginatively reconstruct someone's emotional state in great detail. She starts with her own experience–as a jeweler and particularly as a woman–but that knowledge must be extrapolated outward. This is the act of sympathy that I think is so important to craft.

There is a long history of theories about sympathy in art. Most grew out of late 19th-century German idealism. Initially, the German term was *Einfühlung*, or "feeling [oneself] into," and it was used to describe a process of projection out onto nature. Here, the artist was viewed as a supersensitive agent, projecting his feeling outwards in a pantheistic urge to fuse with nature. Robert Vischer, Theodor Lipps, and Heinrich Worringer are regarded as the most influential advocates of what is now called empathy theory. There were disputes and revisions, but the idea of *Einfühlung* was largely marginalized by 20th-century formalist theories. Today, *Einfühlung* would be dismissed as a sad example of the pathetic fallacy, the tendency to ascribe human emotions to inanimate objects. Meanwhile, *Einfühlung* was translated into English as *empathy*, and co-opted by psychology. The sense of the word mutated to mean the ability of one person to correctly interpret the emotional condition of another, which is how most people understand empathy today. But this new definition is very close to the old meaning of sympathy, so I'll simply use the old word.

In contrast to German idealists, I think of sympathy in art as emerging from a relationship between the artist and others, and I think of it as an imaginative recreation, rather than a projection. My understanding of the word is derived largely from James Q. Wilson's book, *The Moral Sense*, in which he defines sympathy as the "human capacity for being affected by the feelings and experiences of others."[4] Wilson insists that sympathy acts not as a monistic principle that applies in each and every case, but a tendency that is manifested in different ways in different cultures. As a moral sentiment, sympathy motivates altruistic acts like donating blood, putting one's own life in jeopardy to save a drowning person, or intervening to stop a crime in progress.

There is speculation about a genetic basis for sympathy. Evolutionary biologists propose that *Homo sapiens'* ancestors evolved on the African savanna between two million and half a million years ago. The fossil record, in combination with stone tools and animal bones found at ancient campsites, strongly suggest that these ancestors were highly social. Recent studies in brain function indicate that proto-humans' brains expanded dramatically to accommodate three distinct social capabilities: tool-making, language

acquisition, and social intelligence. The latter ability is suggested by evidence of increasing behavioral flexibility, more food-sharing, and the social complexities brought about by pair bonding and prolonged infant dependency.[5] The upshot is that proto-humans probably worked together and communicated extensively–two characteristics of a true society–and the brain structure of early hominids evolved in parallel with their new social milieu. It's entirely possible that sympathy, like the instinct to learn language, is built into the human genome. We could all be inheriting a tendency for sympathy.

In a society, one must be able to anticipate the behavior of others, which is to say that you must guess accurately what others think and feel. A familiar example: child-rearing. Anybody who has spent time around infants knows that their powers of communication are primitive (if hard to ignore), and a parent must guess what their child is making noise about. Is he hungry? Tired? In pain? A correct reading of the child's state of mind will help solve the problem. And the reading must be intuitive: one doesn't learn how to read babies in a classroom. In other words, the parent must have a working sense of sympathy.

Sympathy depends on an ability to imaginatively reconstruct another person's emotional condition, to understand what the other is feeling, and to predict reactions. Wilson stresses that employing one's imagination is an essential part of sympathy.

We cannot, of course, know what others feel, so we must imagine it. Our powers of imagination are very strong; they can be aroused not only by the plight of a friend but by the flickering lights and shadows on a motion picture screen, so that we are reduced to tears by the sight of a fictitious boy looking in vain for an equally fictitious dog.[6]

In this sense, sympathy is not a projection, as the German idealists would describe it, but the ability to recreate another's mental condition. The process is partly inward-looking: we remember how we feel under certain circumstances; we recall those feelings with pleasure or distaste. We also look outward, observing all the nonverbal cues that humans recognize (facial expression, posture, body movements, even pheromones). Our internal frame of reference then is matched with direct observation, and we make intuitive calculations: this person must be thinking *this*, she must be feeling *that*. And since imagination is required to do so, there must be a component of creativity in sympathy.

It doesn't take too much reflection to see that a faculty for sympathy and imaginative reconstruction would prove useful in social life. How do you judge whether someone is lying, or intends to cheat you? How do you work with a partner, the way glassblowers must, anticipating their every move? How do you read the mood of your lover? In every social situation there remains a level of unspoken apprehension, in which we "interrogate our thoughts and feelings, asking how we would behave in some imagined situation."[7] The interrogation gives us an answer, which we use to predict another's behavior, and to plan our own.

This, I believe, is how somebody like Sharon Church thinks. When she says, "I am a woman, I make jewelry for women–and a lot of women artists operate out of their own experience,"[8] she is summarizing the sympathy that emerges from her firsthand knowledge of what it's like to be a woman, and her imaginative reconstruction of what other women might need. But the intricate knowledge of another's emotional state is only half the story for an artist: that knowledge must be translated into an object. And in craft, this translation is almost universally a comforting, helping gesture. This might seem obvious, but it is not.

In 1986, Canadian art critic John Bentley Mays wrote a controversial article for *American Craft* magazine in which he equated the spirit of 20th-century art with contentiousness and criticality. He went on to flog the crafts for never having "developed a self-critical attitude capable of pushing it into the total reversals and radical renewals which have heralded each new dawn in the history of Modern art."[9] Mays is certainly not alone in locating the essence of art in confrontation and rupture. The artistic avant-garde was virtually invented by 19th-century radicals. Ever since, the visual arts have been closely aligned with socialism, with its vast contempt for the middle class and its outrage against capitalism. For decades, the truly modern artist was assumed to stand outside of the mainstream–especially of commerce!–and behold the world at a critical distance, just as Mays prescribes.

When Church says, "I am a woman, I make jewelry for women...," she is summarizing the sympathy that emerges from her firsthand knowledge of what it's like to be a woman, and her imaginative reconstruction of what other women might need.

But the sympathetic craftsperson cannot behold her audience so critically. From the beginning of the creative process, she assumes that her audience is essentially like herself: they feel the same pleasures, encounter the same obstacles, hold the same aspirations. She is not out to beat people over their heads for their sins, but to offer help and comfort. In this sense, some craft is diametrically opposed to the critical stance of modern art. Criticality always assumes somebody is wrong. Even when a radical takes up a victim's cause, there is always a third party who is to blame for the injustice at hand. (We're all familiar with the list of villains: capitalists, sexists, racists,

the chief executive of Exxon, etc.) Sympathy, on the other hand, concentrates on a transaction between only two: I and Thou, essentially alike. And that sense of likeness precludes accusations of wrongdoing. (Blame the other, blame yourself!) Instead, the sympathetic attitude assumes that somebody might use a little help.

The primary act of the sympathetic craftsperson is to reach out to another. It's very difficult for me to find a vocabulary to elaborate this insight, but it calls to mind the process that psychologists call bonding. First, people must sense likeness, the feeling that both share something in common. Two individuals must metaphorically speak the same language. Then, relationships are built through mutual assistance, where favors are given and returned. The deepest bonds develop when one feels that another is sensitive to their needs, and can be counted upon to express compassion or offer help. Sympathetic craft is closely analogous.

Based on her experience as a person in the world, and on her experience as a maker of objects, the craftsperson calculates how objects can be beneficial. The nature of these benefits is diverse, of course, and will be subject to the sensitivities and enthusiasms of the maker. A potter who takes great pleasure in beauty will try to make beautiful pots, thinking that they will elicit an equal pleasure. A weaver who finds significance in the tactile properties of handwoven cloth will believe that her customers might get back in touch with their bodies, at least a little bit, by wearing her garments. A jeweler might see her necklaces as a useful psychological defense, like Sharon Church does. In each case, the maker designs an object to recreate an experience that she found beneficial for herself. This, precisely, is the helping gesture. In turn, the object becomes a medium for this gesture of aid and comfort. The pot, the garment, the necklace: each becomes an extension of the maker, and a vehicle for the maker's sympathy. They are surrogates for the craftsperson. Indeed, a certain kind of craft is embodied sympathy.

The maker's artfulness lies in how ingeniously the performance is fashioned, and how effectively it reconstructs the intended emotional state.

What does "embodied" mean? Regrettably, Danto does not provide a clear definition.[10] Obviously, he means something more than ordinary semiosis, as a sign stands for its signified. This is the way a stoplight indicates one should bring one's car to a halt, or that the word "c-a-t" stands for those fuzzy, four-legged critters. Symbolization will not suffice, either. I think Danto chose the word for its religious overtones. It's no accident that his major essay on the subject uses "transfiguration" in its title: the word is loaded with overtones of spiritual metamorphosis and glorification. When he speaks of embodied meaning, Danto suggests an idea made vividly present, practically given flesh and blood. Alternatively, he connects embodiment to a manifestation of the artist's mind: "It is as if a work of art were like an externalization of the artist's consciousness, as if we could see his way of seeing and not merely what he saw."[11]

I would hold to all of Danto's implications save the religious one. A beautiful pot does not symbolize beauty. Nor does it represent its maker's intention to make somebody's life enjoyable and thus a little better. The pot itself *is* beautiful, and in the right circumstances, it does make life better. We are used to thinking of tools as an extension of the hand, but I see sympathetic craft as an extension of its makers. The pot, in being touched, extends the potter's touch to its user. The necklace, in being worn, actualizes the jeweler's wish to make her customer more beautiful and confident. As far as I can tell, this is embodiment. I must stress that for this whole process to work, the object must be used. The fullness of its effects cannot be grasped until the object is placed into service, in either a personal or a social space. To merely look at the object, as if it were on a pedestal, is not sufficient.

The way pottery is used is a subject of frequent commentary, and since I collect and use pots, I can bear witness to the necessity of use. Once I buy a new bowl, I do not leave it on a shelf: the thing goes straight into our kitchen. It gets used, just like any other piece of kitchenware. But no two handmade pots are the same, and their unique characteristics form their unique pleasures. One of my bowls is chunky, broad, with a wide foot–good for a heavy load of stew. Another has a narrow foot, and demands special care so that I don't tip it over, which–surprisingly–makes it more interesting. Another bowl has a faceted surface, which feels quite different in my hand than any others I have. And another has a wonderful "Shino crawl" glaze inside it, which is revealed slowly as I eat. One might think that experiencing a bunch of straightforward, functional bowls should be dull, but it's not. Each bowl is an individual; each experience is pleasantly different.

My point is that those pleasures are only experienced through use, and sometimes only through repeated use. To truly understand those bowls, I had to eat out of them, clean them, nest them in one another. I had to get my hands on them to fully experience them. There's just no other way to do it.

To return to Church's work: Sharon's sympathy is best experienced through the extended process of use. A woman must wear the jewelry and become an actress in a drama. A woman must look at herself in a mirror, touch the jewelry, feel

its weight on her body. But more than that, the jewelry must be worn in the presence of others. The wearer must be able to observe how people react, so as to better gauge her own emotional transformation. If Church did her job well, a woman will feel differently once the process is complete. She will feel prepared, confident, attractive, sensual.

You could say that some kinds of craft demand a performance to be fully realized. And this performance–if designed by an experienced maker–constitutes a reenactment that was planned in all respects. Eating from a pot, putting on a scarf, wearing a necklace: each of these (at its best) constitutes a performance that has been anticipated in great detail. The maker's artfulness lies in how ingeniously the performance is fashioned, and how effectively it reconstructs the intended emotional state.

* * * * *

Not all craft embodies sympathy. For more than a century, the central pursuit of ambitious craftspeople has been to get their work accepted as art. In the '60s and '70s, this ambition was manifested in the production of sculpture in craft mediums. More recently, it is manifested in attempts to produce conceptual art in craft mediums. With few exceptions, both kinds of work abandon the traditional uses and formats of craft, in favor of quasi-artworks that are intended to be seen in exhibitions, or displayed at a proper aesthetic distance in the homes of discerning collectors.[13] Generally, craft-as-art is not pottery, not earrings, not scarves. Most artist-craftspeople avoid such quotidian forms. Craft-as-art is designed to be looked at, to be examined for aesthetic pleasure or intellectual gratification. There is little of the performance, interaction, and extended, layered experience that one encounters with functional craft. Craft-as-art is less capable of embodying sympathy because it shuns ordinary use and intimate human contact.

A philosophical problem also remains. My implicit claim for a theory of embodied sympathy is that effective work of this kind is not reflexive or stupid in any way, but requires intelligence and an unusual degree of sensitivity. But the braininess of embodied sympathy would be in the form that neuropsychologist Howard Gardner calls "personal intelligence,"[14] and thus partly outside the realm of logic and reasoned discourse.

This would be important only insofar as craft-as-embodied-sympathy claims to be art. If, to follow Danto, an object is to be understood as art, certain conditions should apply.

Danto holds (correctly, I believe) that there is an art world, which he initially defined as "an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an art world."[15] He later added that "to be a member of the art world is to participate in what we might term the discourse of reasons,"[16] and suggests very strongly that personal experience is outside of said discourse. Allowable discourses should mean the same thing to every viewer, Danto says, and personal associations like family history–and presumably, any subjective, emotional experience–fall outside of the discourse of reasons. (Not surprisingly, at the end of his essay, Danto equates craft and mere things, and disqualifies craft from the status of art.)

This essay is an attempt to align the sympathetic impulse in craft with a spirit of dispassionate inquiry. Yes, sympathy is not reasoned so much as it is felt. But it seems to me that craft, because it can be so comfortably implicated into ordinary life, is nicely suited to be a vehicle for sympathy. In fact, craft is uniquely competent to do so, much more than painting or sculpture or installations that stand at a distance from the lives that ordinary people lead. And so I think that sympathy can be a subject matter, a proper avenue of inquiry for craft. Should it follow that the human faculty for sympathy must fall outside of the art world's discourse of reasons? ■

Bruce Metcalf is a jeweler and occasional writer from Philadelphia.

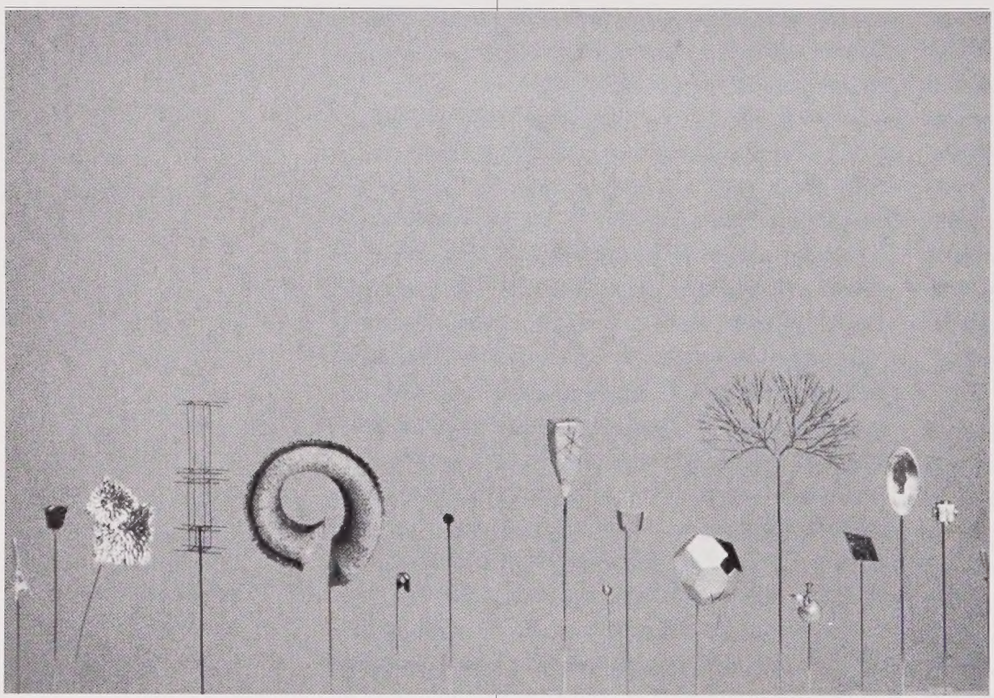
This essay completes a trilogy, which taken together are intended to describe the distinction between craft and art, and then point to craft's unique competence. The first two essays are "The Problem of the Fountain" in *Metalsmith*, Summer 2000, and "The Hand: At the Heart of Craft" in *American Craft*, August/September 2000.

1 Marjorie Simon, "The Articulation of Desire: The Jewelry of Sharon Church," *Metalsmith*, Winter 1999, p. 15.
2 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "Ornament," *Art Bulletin*, Volume 21, 1939, pp. 378-79.
3 For a brief summary of empathy theory, see Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992), pp. 140-47.
4 James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 30.
5 See Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: The Cognitive Origins of Art and Science* Thames & Hudson, 1996, for one account of proto-human development and the genetic basis of the mind. The idea of social intelligence comes from Howard Gardner.
6 Wilson, p. 32.
7 Mithen, p. 147.
8 Author's interview of Sharon Church, January 14, 2002.
9 John Bentley Mays,"Comment," *American Craft*, December 1985/January 1986, p. 39.
10 The most complete essay that Danto offers on the meaning of embodiment that I could find is "Symbolic Expressions and the Self," in *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1992).
11 Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 164.
12 For some cheerleading on this trend, see Glenn Adamson, "The Next Moment in Studio Furniture," *Tradition in Contemporary Furniture*, Mastelli & Kelsey, eds., (The Furniture Society, 2001).
13 The author is guilty of this, too.
14 Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, (New York: Basic Books, 1983).
15 Arthur C. Danto, "The Artworld," *Journal of Philosophy*, 61, 1964, p. 580.
16 Danto, "The Art World Revisited: Comedies of Similarity," *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective* p. 33.

"MIKROMEGAS"

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, NEW YORK
SEPTEMBER 13, 2001–APRIL 28, 2002

by MARJORIE SIMON



Installation view (detail), 2001

How grateful we must be to Otto Künzli for putting together the intimate and witty feast called Mikromegas! The great misfortune of opening in New York so close to the September 11 attacks was more than compensated for by the tonic of seeing 220 beautiful handmade objects from contemporary metal artists all over the world. The third of five exhibitions organized on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Bavarian Arts and Crafts Association, it recalled a time when stickpins, for women's hats and men's cravats, were commonplace bourgeois accessories. The title, meaning "small works, large ideas," refers to *Micromegas*, the title of a 1752 story by Voltaire about a 120,000-foot alien who marvels at the microscopic inhabitants of planet Earth. The conceit of communicating monumentality in miniature is not new today (in fact, Swift had described the Lilliputians in *Gulliver's Travels* 25 years before Voltaire), but it has lost nothing through familiarity. True, not every piece achieved the "riddle in a universe" suggested in the catalogue, but many were sublime, and a few reached for the stars.

With such a large number of artists included, there were thankfully many names that may be unknown to American audiences, such as Tasso W. Mattar (Spain), who carved the Titanic from amber, and Watoru Ikeda (Japan), who created a tiny skull inlaid with butterfly wings. The welcome inclusion of known masters such as Hermann Jünger, Gijs Bakker, Anton Cepka, and Mario Pinton, among others, provided a familiar anchor. Naturally, it is impossible to do justice to the range of ideas or artists represented, but a few themes should be noted.

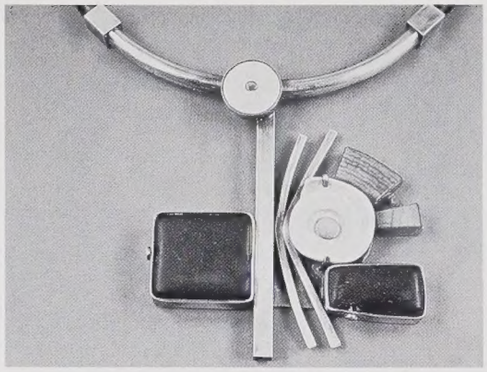
Constructions ranged from obsessive complexity (Giovanni Corvaja's granulated gold spiral) to sublime simplicity (Netherlands' Iris Eichenberg and Suska Mackert's collaboration of two needles connected by red thread). For raw virtuosity it was hard to beat Francesco Pavan's plique-á-jour enamel, possibly the largest cloison ever made, with a rough beauty that recalled millennia of Roman glass- and gold work in a geometric, architectural frame. There was permanence (gold, diamonds) and ephemera (Hilda De Decker of Belgium framed a tomato in silver; it had shriveled to a dusty shard by the time of this review).

The catalogue states that most work was made especially for the show. Some artists took an opportunity to try out new ideas, while others worked within their customary vocabulary. Clothing was referenced in a number of ways. Wire needlework by Blanka Cepkova of Slovakia included a little popcorn stitch in her tiny garment. Sondra Sherman (USA), placed thread behind glass and Esther Knobel (Israel), created the literal impression of a needle in a silver rectangle. In a single gold line, Birgit Laken's (Netherlands) high-heeled button boot evoked fashion in the age of Voltaire, and Mary Preston (USA) recalled jeweled accessories of the last century in gold and enamel. Robert Baines (Australia) parodied them all with a pink pig framed in Etruscan goldwork.

Several artists, including Bettina Speckner (Germany), used lenses, glass, or crystal to comment on the metaphor of seeing and perspective intimated in the title. Sigurd Bronger's (Norway) *Fly-Pin* was visible through a lens held in an elaborate gold and steel housing, and Ingjerd Hanevold (Norway) placed a lens at the opening of her cut-and-folded gold "wind sock," magnifying the interior and making the far end recede into the distance.

A word about the installation and catalogue. Without explanation from museum personnel, it was not apparent that the installation was planned deliberately by Kunzli to be viewed below eye level, as if from a great distance. This had the unfortunate effect of appearing as if the works, which are all quite small to begin with, were stuck on a low shelf. Viewers who refused to bend down risked missing significant details. The catalogue essay by Hans Ulrich Reck may be poorly translated, or just obscure, but discussion of the nature of illusion and reality as a subtext to the exhibition was not wholly successful. But no matter. The work speaks for itself: so far away, so close.

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer based in New Jersey.



"RAMONA SOLBERG: FINDINGS"

BANK OF AMERICA GALLERY, SEATTLE
NOVEMBER 8–DECEMBER 4, 2001

MINT MUSEUM OF CRAFT + DESIGN,
CHARLOTTE, NC
JANUARY 15–MARCH 31, 2002

MUSEUM OF CRAFT & FOLK ART,
SAN FRANCISCO
APRIL 16–JUNE 15, 2002

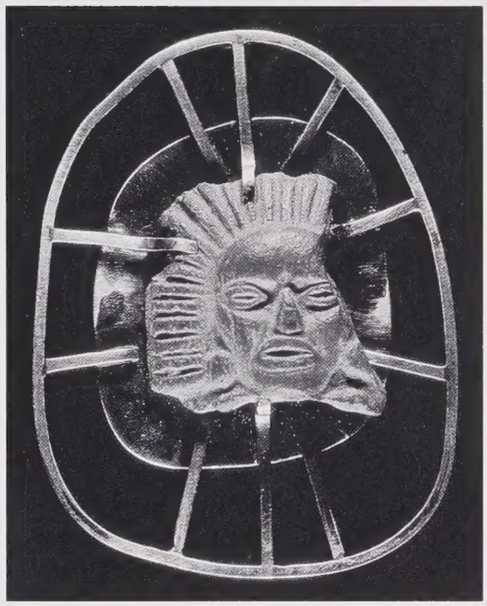
NATIONAL ORNAMENTAL METALS MUSEUM,
MEMPHIS
JULY 14–SEPTEMBER 15, 2002

by MATTHEW KANGAS

The traveling show of Seattle jeweler Ramona Solberg's art and its accompanying catalogue, *Findings*, may go a long way toward cementing Solberg's role in American craft art history. West Coast artists are often given short shrift in big museum collections and overview surveys, but Solberg's own natural reticence also probably contributed to her lagging status, now sure to rise. Essays by Helen Drutt English and former Seattle Art Museum curator Vicki Halper place her in the context and perspective of American craft, and relate her to European artists like Kurt Schwitters and jewelers Falko Marx and Bernhard Schobinger, as well as mentioning precedents and influences, like her University of Washington teacher Ruth Penington, Central Washington University colleague Donald Tompkins, and, of course, Alexander Calder.

The exhibition is a series of waist-high, glass-topped, wall-mounted display cases. Although it has seemed over the years that this international polymath was not prolific, the 61 necklaces, bracelets, brooches, and pins add up handsomely to a life's work and offer an opportunity for broader and narrower generalizations and conclusions about her oeuvre. Thirteen works by friends and colleagues are also included. It is extremely useful and instructional to see side by side the work of Solberg and the other artists, Laurie Hall, Ron Ho, Kiff Slemmons, Donald Tompkins, and Nancy Worden. With work of such small scale, it's possible to provide curatorial context with the real objects, not just catalogue illustrations.

One of the pioneer jewelers of the 1960s, along with J. Fred Woell, Solberg always seemed like either the youngest artist of an older group or



the oldest artist in a younger one. Her modular compositions and flattened surfaces allude to modernists like Penington and Margaret de Patta; her funky mix of semi-precious stones and found materials align her with the '60s artists who rejected glamorous jewelry in favor of humble, quasi-populist ornaments that, as Solberg once put it, "could be easily worn to the supermarket." It's very Berkeley whole foods co-op jewelry.

Seen all of a piece, Solberg's art looks like symbolic autobiographical talismans, West Coast in their personalized and anecdotal implications, yet sometimes hard to appreciate fully without knowledge of the artist's background in the U.S. Army, graduate work in Norway, and dozens of trips to Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia (15 trips alone to India!).

Seen without such helpful intellectual coddling, however, the necklaces and bracelets have considerable sculptural autonomy. From *Mitla* (ca. 1951), a silver grid pendant with a pre-Columbian face fragment, through *Ampersand* (1982), with its folding ruler and brass type, to *Jet Stream* (2000), the placement of all the various elements is always flawless.

At the same time, another West Coast artistic convention, narrative or storytelling art, is operative here. The viewer assembles the puzzle pieces or mentally fashions found and fabricated juxtapositions so that a tale of travel (or travail) emerges. The ivory domino next to the Indian bone hand in *Look, I'm a Winner!* (2000) suggests chance, order, and a call for help. *Indian Bank* (1995) sets coins with images of Native Americans within silver settings to comment on money and the plight of indigenous populations after the settling of the Far West. As more time passes, Solberg's meanings are sure to be unraveled and appreciated as symbolic, allegorical, or socially loaded. As with so much American jewelry art, these dimensions of content are rarely alluded to or privileged beyond heavily worked-up intentional statements by the artists themselves, so often wide of the mark compared to one's experience of the work.

Leaving aside the rich referential iconography in Solberg, her manipulation of found objects such as violin bow handles into complex formal puns harks right back to early Cubism, not surprising since Solberg was born in 1921. However, as Clement Greenberg once noted in a discussion of American ceramics, "Achievement is all that matters in the end." Solberg's achievement resides in her jewelry, but its impact goes beyond her constructions. To battle for informality in a period of tight technique; to compile a collective content that unveils the wide world we inhabit; to anticipate multicultural art by honoring Third World artifacts rather than conquering them; to provide a role model not just for women artists but all artists who quietly believe in what they are doing and persevere, all these undertakings begin in Solberg's achievement but have far wider ramifications on American craft and art in general.

Finally, it's amusing to contemplate how Solberg broke down fine material hierarchies, even going so far as to work with colored plastic Doodley-Doo (PVC). Garish, green, and gooey, the untitled 1972 necklace of revolving circles and stars could not look more contemporary. Maybe Solberg's real audience is only just beginning to discover her. It could be they have just been born.

Matthew Kangas is a Seattle-based writer and contributing editor to *Art in America*, *GLASS*, and *Sculpture*.

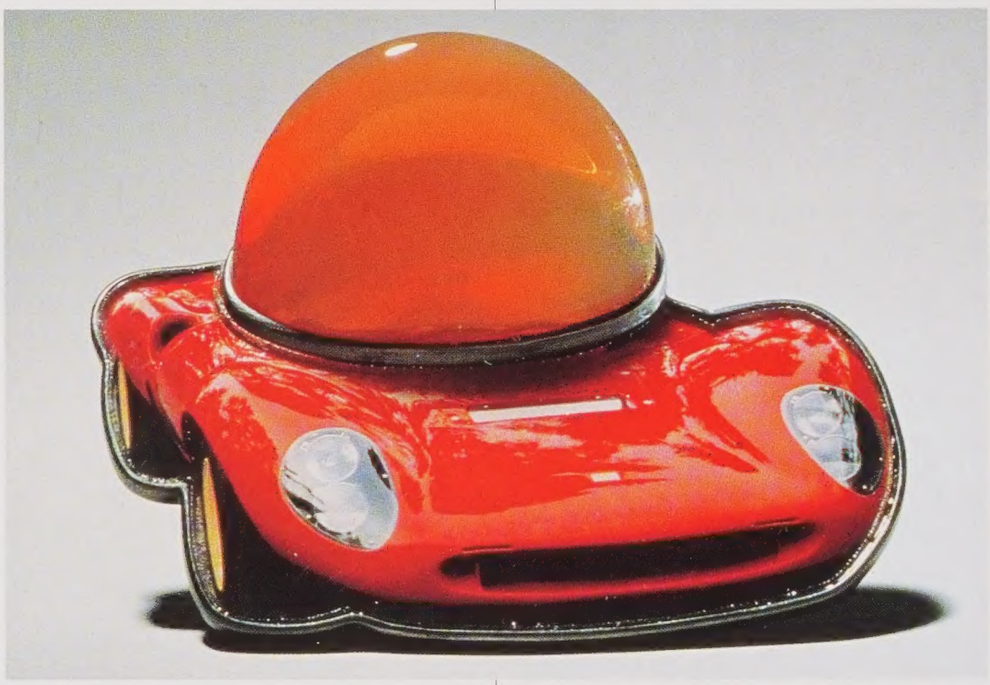
top
Jet Stream, 2000
silver, jet, ivory, shell, bone, rubber cord
4 x 22 1/2 x 3 3/4"
Collection Elsie Michie
Photo: Rod Slemmons

Mitla (pendant/brooch), ca. 1951
silver, pre-Columbian clay artifact
3 x 2 1/4"
Photo: Rod Slemmons

"GIJS BAKKER: I DON'T WEAR JEWELS, I DRIVE THEM"

HELEN DRUTT GALLERY, PHILADELPHIA
OCTOBER 20–DECEMBER 1, 2001

by TODD NOE



above top
FERRARI DINO 206SP 1966, 2001
101.07 ct. fired opal, silver, photo-plexi-glass
$2\,1/2 \times 3 \times 1$"
Private collection

above
Porsche, 2001
stereo-lithography, polyester
$4 \times 5\,1/4 \times 2\,3/4$"

Gijs Bakker has parked a room full of cars in the Helen Drutt Gallery. His current show, "I Don't Wear Jewels, I Drive Them," is a collection that combines the elements of fine jewelry with images of high performance exotic sports cars. The majority of works on view are brooches in which Bakker has carefully selected photographic images of rare, fast, and expensive automobiles. In each piece, a silver frame surrounds a small, flat, intensely colorful image of a sports car. The silver outlines the photo, delicately wrapping and curving around fenders and bumpers. Atop these cars he has decided to mount some very large gems—big ones. Whoppers. One has a 160K aquamarine, another has a 198K smoky quartz, and another a 105K amethyst.

Not only are these stones big, they are oddly and individually cut for each piece. Some stones, which could be described as bulbous cabochons, are set directly and purposely over the cockpit as if translucent canopies. Another piece has stones cut to accentuate and cover the rounded fenders of a vintage Jaguar.

The deliberate positioning and setting of the stones transforms the once exotic and desirable autos into absurd abstract bubble cars. The images are at once adorned and desecrated. The same can be said for the stones. The way they are oddly and specifically cut undermines our preconceptions of what they should look like and how they should be used. A 100K opal used as the roof of a '66 Ferrari?

Everything about this work speaks of excess. Bakker has chosen some of the fastest and most expensive cars that can be driven on public roads, then selected bright colors and shiny chrome and encased them in precious metal. His spec-sheet-like titles are a testament to this excess: *MCLAUREN F1 1993, Top speed 372 k.ph, 169 CT aquamarine; FERRARI DINO 206SP 1966, Top speed 250 k. ph., 101.07 CT. opal; or MARCOS GT 1996, Top speed 275 k.ph., 105.6 CT. amethyst.*

A piece called *Bus Crash* is similar to the car brooches in its technique, but the image and use of precious stones shows us a more serious side of Gijs Bakker. For *Bus Crash* Bakker has selected an image of a bus that has been involved in a very serious and devastating traffic accident. Scattered across the surface of the image are small bezel-set diamonds and sapphires. The placement of these stones seems to mark the spots where victims perished.

In contrast to the sports car pieces, Bakker here uses his skills of juxtaposition to show us perhaps how excessive we have become. Too big. Too bold. Too fast. In *Bus Crash* he shows us a sobering worldly symbol of chaos, pain, and destruction. To this image he applies a layer of order and refinement through the precision craft of a fine jeweler. The sparkling facade fools you, it tempts you and draws you near—only to reveal what destruction lies beneath.

As jewelry, all of these brooches are beautifully considered in their technique and execution. The pieces are small, 2 to 3 inches, a size that could be worn and not be conspicuous. They are delicate and refined, another contrast to the horsepower and audacity they embody.

The next group of work is a continuation of the automotive theme. Bakker turns these cars in a completely different direction. For this group the artist turns to the computer and technology. Bakker starts with an image of an automobile, in this case a Porsche 911 Turbo Carrera, which has been digitized and manipulated on a computer. Bakker twists and stretches and curves the Porsche to form an abstract car cuff bracelet. He continues bending and shrinking and makes a car ring. The artist then instructs the computer to use his images and a process called stereolithography to create solid, wearable pieces of jewelry. This process uses digital coordination, lasers, and a container of liquid plastic to achieve this end. These pieces illustrate the great potential of combining modern technology with the age-old desire to adorn.

In a small gesture of a brooch called *Me and You*, the artist has selected two identical, small watches, which are set side by side and outlined very plainly in silver. Each watch is set at a different time. Through this simple composition Bakker is able to create something enormous in our minds. He creates a narrative of connection and separation with his title and by running the watches at different times. I am here. You are there, perhaps in another country, in a different time zone. Through time and distance we are separated, yet through the art and the jewelry we are connected.

Todd Noe is a Philadelphia-based sculptor, who has long been involved with metal and academia.

clockwise from bottom left
Maria Phillips
Moment, 2001
metal, sheep casing
20 x 1 1/2 x 1"
Photo: Doug Yaple

Louise Rauh
Memory of a Rose, 2001
etched, dyed aluminum
5 x 10"

Suzan Rezac
Opus Tessellatum, 2001
metal
1/8 x 17 x 1 3/8"
Photo: Tim Van Eynde

"TRANSFORMATIONS 3: CONTEMPORARY WORKS IN JEWELRY AND SMALL METALS"

SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY CRAFT, PITTSBURGH
NOVEMBER 16, 2001–MARCH 22, 2002

by BETH A. HUSEMAN

The individual works that compose "Transformation 3: Contemporary Works in Jewelry and Small Metals," organized by the Society for Contemporary Craft, were specifically created to address the idea of "transformation." However, the exhibition as a whole ultimately engages the larger issue of the evolution and new directions of contemporary metalwork. As a group, the works successfully reveal that metalsmiths continue to redefine the medium through the inclusion of diverse materials, technical innovations, and the relegation of utilitarian objects to symbolic referents.

In several cases metal is used in conjunction with other materials, as in Maria Phillips's *Moment*. The individual podlike structures that form the necklace consist of sheep casing over wire armatures. While the sheep casing could be said to visually dominate the piece, Phillips has left several uncovered or partially covered forms, which reveal the beauty and delicacy of the supporting metal structure. The necklace appears to be in the process of evolution or decay and, because it is the wire infrastructure that lends the pods their grace, the inclusion of another medium has not clearly eclipsed the role of metal.

In addition to combining metal with other mediums, other works subverted qualities often associated with traditional metalwork or the intrinsic characteristics of the material itself, such as a reflective surface or luminescence in Darlys Ewoldt's *Endings and Beginnings* and Louise Rauh's *Memory of a Rose*. Visible upon entering the exhibition, Ewoldt's bowl looks as if its graceful arcs and curves are those of a turned wood piece that has been placed in the exhibition as a sort of ironic Duchampian gesture. Upon closer inspection it becomes clear *Endings and Beginnings* is made of a patinated copper with a rich mottled surface. *Memory of a Rose* appears to be constructed of delicate handcrafted paper complete with holes; however the vibrant red bowl is actually made of etched and dyed aluminum, giving it a surprising amount of strength. Although it could be argued that these pieces are merely applying the aesthetics of other mediums to metal, this is not the case. These works both stretch traditional metalworking practice and offer a glimpse into the directions that metal may take in the future.

The innovative metalwork of Suzan Rezac, winner of the exhibition's Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder's Prize, demonstrated an unparalleled technical prowess. *Opus Tessellatum* is a "marriage of metals," consisting of over 150 tiny connected squares of various metals fitted together to create the necklace's patterns. When *Opus Tessellatum* is stretched out horizontally, the squares touch each other and the swirls, curves, and geometric shapes create a dynamic image; but when the ends are hooked together, the squares separate slightly, making the design even more animated. The piece, which includes metals such as gold, silver, bronze, copper, brass, and the Japanese alloys *shakudo* and *shibuchi*, retains the integrity of the material and results in a piece that literally transforms itself into a fluid mosaic.

Nearly all works in the exhibition are nonfunctional; even in several cases where the objects are bowls, spoons, or cups they could not be used in any practical sense. Instead, these works enlist the utilitarian format as a point of reference rather than existing as functional objects themselves. For example, Kiwon Wang's *Spoonful of Oysters*...is strictly speaking a spoon; however the luxuriousness of the pearls coupled with their spherical form immediately belies the point that this is not an implement for eating. In the case of Harriete Estel Berman's *Consuming Conversation*, tins and canisters are cut up and reassembled as delicate teacups complete with elegant silver handles. Again, the traditional use of a functional object is subverted because the cup's top is sealed off. Words and letters are cut out and reassembled ransom-note style to create phrases reminiscent of Barbara Kruger, such as "Can a new BMW meet your emotional needs?" As with Wang's *Spoonful of Oysters*..., Berman has already filled the object with meaning, making the lack of function secondary to the issues she raises of excessive consumption in capitalist culture. Functionality also comes into question in *100 Rivets* by Geoffrey Giles, who elevates these mass-produced items used in manufacturing to a precious status by making the fastener the main compositional element of a small gold sculpture.

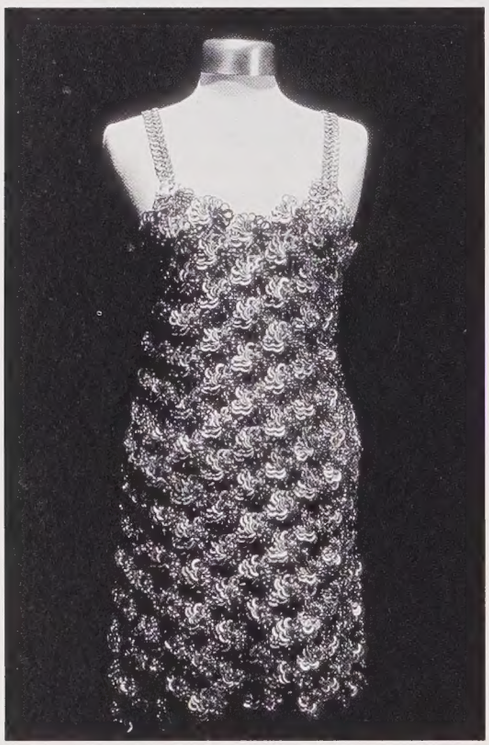
Because all of the works included in *Transformation 3* were created in the past year, the exhibition is a valuable barometer of the changing role and new directions in jewelry and small metal works.

Beth A. Huseman is a Brooklyn-based writer and editor.

"METALDEPARTURES"

SAINT LOUIS ARTISTS' GUILD
OCTOBER 28–DECEMBER 8, 2001

by BETSY SCHEIN GOLDMAN



above
Cat Chow
Flower Dress, 2001
metal
72 x 20 x 20"

above right
Sun Hong
Sacred to the Memory of Rah
sterling silver, 14k gold
$2\ 1/4 \times 1\ 1/4 \times 3/4$"

"Metaldepartures," a national exhibition sponsored by the Society for Midwest Metalsmiths, lived up to its title. The exhibition committee chose the theme with an eye toward attracting sculpture and jewelry that emphasized metal, yet departed from the traditional. The 82 accepted works, from the minds and hands of 68 artists, were witty, imaginative, and original. Juror Pat Flynn held true to his conviction that by "selecting fewer artists and allowing them to have more than one object in the show" he created a "cohesive exhibit with greater depth."

There were, as could be expected, many objects one would classify as "jewelry" (i.e., bracelets, rings, brooches, necklaces), but most were not created expressly for adornment. They were not what one would consider functional or comfortable to wear, but were thought-provoking and often humorous interpretations using nontraditional shapes, additions, and methods of construction. Two examples were John Kent Garrott's reflective, thoughtful silver, steel, and paper bracelet titled *Remember Your Verses*, and his *Ignition Experiment #2*, a striking collar ruff of steel, brass, and matchsticks.

Included in the show were several non-functional pieces of clothing, among them two chain mail dresses tailored to perfection by Cat Chow; a hammered copper-and-Prismacolor hat by Felicia Szorad titled *Groweth*; and a knitted steel wool *Sweater* and exquisitely patterned, pierced, and painstakingly cut out *Necklace/Neckbrace* of sterling silver and tiny seed pearls by Veleta Vancza.

The fabrication and intricacy of so many of the pieces were awe-inspiring. Of note were Paul Benero's *Ways We Measure Society*, symbolically adorned sterling silver "measuring spoons"; a set of three infusion implements by Daniel Huynh (which was awarded the top prize of $500 by the awards judge); Peggy Cochran's necklace *Container Form #3*; Michael Gleason's *Ready, Set, Go!*, a small sculpture of a rocket-carrying turtle; and two containers by Sun Hong, *Homage to My Mom* and *Sacred to the Memory of Rah*, in which Hong used a splendid combination of techniques to please the eye and added detail and interest to otherwise simple and classic shapes.

Sue Amendolara's sensuous and graceful *Allerton's Garden* and *Seedlings*, along with a brooch and earring set, and Randy Stratton's *Le Stelle Riparate*, a silver and gold hinged container, offered a pleasantly soothing and calming pause, while Robert Longyear's *Karmic Horizon* was disturbingly frenetic. Kara Mackintosh succeeded in making metal come to life in her gracefully designed and manipulated copper and enamel sculpture *Katydidus Pinkus Anomalus*, a magnificent interpretation of several katydids on a leafy twig.

In a class by themselves were Sherri Jaudes's *Trophy*, a shield of bronze and steel with crossed fly swatters under the head of a "trophy" fly; *Nails Down My Spine*, an ingenious and striking necklace worn backwards, incorporating bright-red acrylic fingernails and a sterling silver chain by Carrie Perkins; Lynn Tatum's provocative necklace *5 Days ....My Ass*, made of sterling silver, cubic zirconia and tampons; and Taweesak Molsawat's *Self-Portrait of Remorse*, a place setting of a handwrought dish and stainless flatware (including a spike-bowled spoon) that served up three tongues carved out of wax.

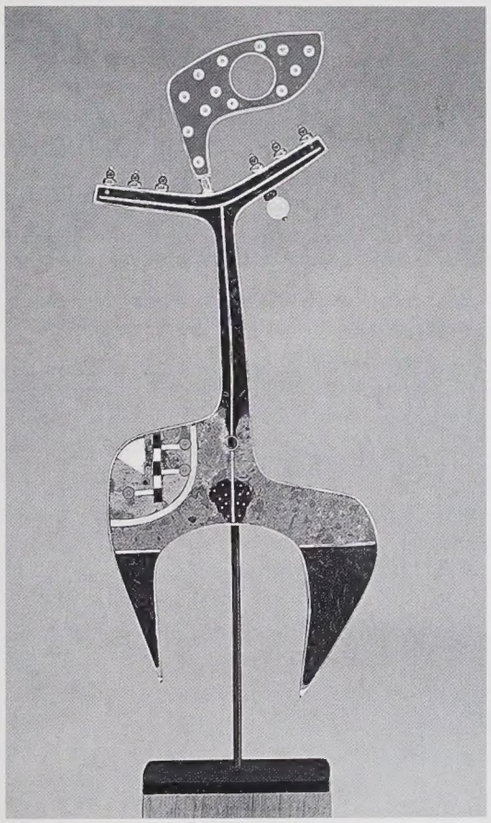
Lady of the Sea, an exquisitely beautiful and flawlessly fabricated brooch by Helen Weaver, was a standout in cloisonné enamel, silver, gold, and freshwater pearls. It was one of the most wearable offerings in the show. Cynthia Cetlin's small but moving *Captive* was a metal bas-relief of a female figure bound in ropes and set on a freeform background of white Corian. The contents of "Metaldepartures" were all deftly executed and cleverly conceived, evoking chuckles and, in some instances, raised eyebrows.

Betsy Schein Goldman is an artist, jeweler, and writer based in Missouri.

"TOD PARDON: RECENT WORKS"

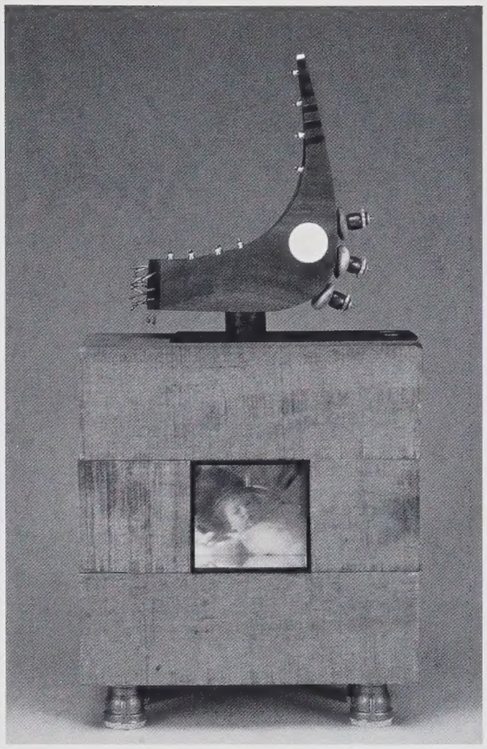
AARON FABER GALLERY, NEW YORK
DECEMBER 6, 2001–JANUARY 5, 2002

by KATE HENSLER FOGARTY



above
Breathing Fire (brooch/sculpture), 2001
sterling silver, 14k gold, mixed inlay, amber, hematite
height 7"

above right
Dexter Guy: Motion and Light (sculpture), 2001
mahogany, padouk, ebony, sterling silver, copper, 14k gold, steel, simulated ivory, river rocks, African trade beads, Ceiva frame
23 x 12 x 7"



In his interviews, personal statements, and work titles, Tod Pardon takes pains to stress the whimsy of his lyrical, brightly colored jewelry—but a consideration of his recent work reveals much deeper, darker emotions. Worn on a necklace or shoulder, his little creatures seem intriguing yet benign; but when surrounded by an exhibitionful of these armless, bug-eyed critters, one senses they're not altogether friendly. Their jaws stretched wide, are these tiny Pardonites meant to suggest harmless newborn birds craning for food? Or are they singing with joy? Screaming in pain? Cackling at us?

The son of famed jewelry artist Earl Pardon, Tod also served as his apprentice for four years until his death in 1991. Yet the whispers that his work is too derivative should be a thing of the past. While Tod does share Earl's medium, materials, and skill, his father seems no more present in his work than other self-declared influences: African decorative arts, pre-Columbian sculpture, world music, and his own son, Dexter Guy.

The show at Aaron Faber Gallery featured 36 works, arranged in no clear order (no dates provided), and included a suite of paintings and three sculptures. The jewelry is all hand-fabricated with Pardon's signature technique: a body of sterling silver and 14k and 22k gold is inlaid cloisonné-style with pigmented glass, as well as wood, bone, simulated ivory, and other materials. Appended to the figures are beads, precious and semiprecious stones, and river pebbles that suggest teeth, eyes, and other body parts.

Pardon is best known for his brooches, and those displayed fell into three styles. The first is a family of pincer-legged, elongated-torso forms that recall the work of Joan Miro. These works, for example *Breathing Fire*, seem most about jewelry's sculptural movement in space (on their Pardon-designed pedestals) or across the body, like brilliantly clad tribal dancers.

The second group of brooches features variations on a being whose crescent-shaped, bug-eyed head is as big as its squarish body, joined by a wispy metal neck. The relatively large field of inlay allows Pardon to gleefully explore organic patterns of dots, shapes, and lines, often several in the same piece, as in *Man Eating Moon Brooch*—an interest no doubt influenced by his mother, fiber artist Eunice Pardon. The third style of brooches resemble two-inch-square snapshots which, like the *Peas Brooch*, are replete with patterns, or include one or more figures in a crude narrative, like studies for the elaborate pendants around the corner.

The pendants on exhibit were the most satisfying works. These tight compositions inlaid with one or two creatures on fields of pattern, wrought in Pardon's electric hues of tangerine, aqua, lime, and cherry, as in *Desert Fruit Pendant*, reveal his training and history as a painter. If his brooches recall prehistoric fossils, the pendants resemble cave paintings: primitive stories that need no explanation across peoples, borders, and time.

Pardon's quirky paintings show his creative wheels turning with a freedom the labor-intensive jewelry does not allow. He's essentially recycled the burn marks on his soldering pad into new vignettes by adorning the leavings of smoke and color with bits of oil stick, gold, and glass beads. The creatures that emerge seem like tiny descendants of Michelangelo's *Slaves*: trapped in the medium, just waiting to be released.

The sculptures are not as successful. In *Dexter Guy Pardon: The Zeitgeist and the Zeeman Effect*, one of Pardon's creatures sits atop a rough-hewn wood box that encases fuzzy footage of his son like a television. It's too jarring, the scale is awkward, and the video doesn't hold your attention: it seems more the creation of a proud father than a purposeful artist.

A large display-only work titled *84 Steps: It's the Tail of the Kite that Makes It Fly*, is the decoder ring to Pardon's subconscious. Eighty-four digital photographs of "personal memory triggers," including expired passports, snapshots of his wife, son, and parents on boats and beaches, and more far flung images of African shields and beadwork, TinTin, or a vivid scarf or flower are rearranged and added to each time the work is mounted. It's almost too intensely personal, but it reveals Pardon's jewelry to be much more than a whim: in his mind, objects, especially his own works, can be imbued with memories, fears, joys, and dreams. That's his chip you're wearing on your shoulder.

Kate Hensler Fogarty is a writer living in New York City.

COMMISSIONS

by Elizabeth Broadrup Lieberman

Jean Mandeberg, *Repair Work*, 2001

Visitors to the law offices of Eli Halpern & Associates in Olympia, Washington, often cannot resist touching the lobby's new wall sculpture, a patterned square whose bold colors and geometry suggest a quilt, but whose feel is distinctly metallic. To create *Repair Work*, Jean Mandeberg centered nine embossed aluminum panels on larger squares made of flattened tin. (The sculptor recycles printed tin from olive oil cans, imported cookie tins, and even TV trays.) The nine tin squares are mounted on a one-inch-thick wood base and framed by heavy steel upholstery tacks that further enhance the piece's varied texture. Seeking to enrich the firm's art collection with its first commission, a senior lawyer asked Mandeberg to create the unique metal sculpture after seeing one of her large wall pieces in a nearby corporate building. In discussions with the firm's lawyers, Mandenberg was impressed not only by their legal acuity but also by their active physical lifestyles (many of the attorneys ride bikes to work). Searching for novel yet appropriate imagery to fill the quiltlike blocks of her mixed-metal sculpture, Mandeberg noticed an old bicycle manual at home and found herself fascinated by its detailed illustrations of tire failure and repair. Struck by the images' relevance to bike commuters as well as the possible legal metaphors suggested by *repair*, she redrew nine graphics from the manual, including "Chafing," "Rim Bruise," and "Blowout," and proposed to emboss them on aluminum squares. Delighted with the idea, the attorneys approved the plan. Eli Halpern & Associates unveiled *Repair Work* at a special celebration in 2001.

Joan Tenenbaum, *Rain Tahitian Pearl Necklace* and *Duke's Tahitian Pearl Cufflinks*, 2001

Returning to rainy Puget Sound after a holiday in the South Pacific, Duke and Jeannine Shold brought home more than 40 black Tahitian pearls. They commissioned Joan Tenenbaum, a metalsmith-jeweler and longtime friend, to transform the pearls into wearable memories of their journey. Jeannine Shold originally envisioned a single necklace with a pendant representing pearls in an oyster shell. Working from this idea, Tenenbaum abstracted the shell shape into a triangle and designed it as a detachable brooch of textured palladium white gold. The artist creates her signature textured surface by making a unique pattern in brass and embossing the pattern in the softer gold. Three small pearls, half drilled and set on wire pegs, lie in the curve of the "shell" brooch. For the necklace, Tenenbaum strung larger black pearls (drilled on the long axis) and added textured hollow gold beads at intervals along the strand, a portion of which can be removed and worn as a choker. Jeannine Shold also asked Tenenbaum to create Tahitian pearl cufflinks as a surprise for her husband, Duke. Since pearls are often associated with feminine jewelry, Tenenbaum faced a challenge to design cufflinks both substantial and masculine enough to suit their six-foot-tall recipient. Her solution incorporates a rectangular base of heavy-gauge sterling with thick edges and near-angular corners. This concave base supports a single black pearl, which is held in place by two strands of heavy, twisted square gold wire. Joan Tenenbaum presented the cufflinks after sharing dinner with her clients; immensely pleased with the gift, Duke Shold joked that he'd have to return to Tahiti for more pearls—this time for a tie tack by Tenenbaum.

Harlan Butt (design), Mark Herndon, Masumi Kataoka, Noppakamol Pimolket, Diana Ramirez (fabrication), *Mace* and *Medallion*, 2001

To commemorate the inauguration of its 13th president, the University of North Texas in Denton commissioned a new mace and medallion, to be designed and fabricated by the university's School of Visual Arts. Administration officials asked experienced metalsmith Harlan Butt to design the new symbols of presidential authority, stipulating that they incorporate the university's seal and traditional mascot, the eagle. Butt, professor of metals and jewelry, submitted three proposed designs for the mace and medallion to incoming president Norval Pohl; he then combined Pohl's preferred features into one final design. The resulting mace is a staff of walnut crowned with a silver eagle. The eagle perches on a round band of green-enameled silver and copper, inset with a silverplated bronze replica of the university's seal. Providing visual balance at the mace's foot, a smaller circular band of metal encloses a single star, symbol of the state of Texas. The silverplated brass medallion, worn by the president at ceremonial occasions, also features a replica of the university seal and hangs on a ribbon of black and green velvet. The ribbon is adorned with rectangular sterling silver links, each engraved with the names and dates of office of previous university presidents or chancellors. (The prominent green in both mace and medallion represents the university's traditional color.) On a budget of $4,000, four graduate students in the metals and jewelry program worked together to fabricate and assemble the presidential symbols during Butt's semester abroad. President Pohl officially accepted the new mace and medallion at his inauguration in May 2001.

Elizabeth Broadrup Lieberman is a freelance writer based in Michigan.

clockwise from opposite page lower left
Jean Mandeberg
Repair Work, 2001
found tin, embossed aluminum, steel upholstery tacks over wood
36 x 36 x 1"
Commissioned by: Eli Halpern & Associates, P.S., Attorneys at Law, Olympia, Washington
Photo: Roger Schreiber

Jean Mandeberg
Repair Work, 2001 (detail)

Joan Tenenbaum
Duke's Tahitian Pearl Cufflinks, 2001
14k gold, sterling, Tahitian black pearls
Each $\frac{5}{8} \times \frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$"

Rain Tahitian Pearl Necklace, 2001
18k palladium white gold, 14k yellow and white gold, Tahitian black pearls.
$1\frac{1}{4} \times 19\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$"
Commissioned by: Duke and Jeannine Shold
Photo: Doug Yaple

this page from top
Harlan Butt (design), Mark Herndon, Masumi Kataoka, Noppakamol Pimolket, Diana Ramirez (fabrication)
Medallion and *Mace*, 2001
Commissioned by: University of North Texas, Denton

Medallion with ribbon: silverplated brass, sterling silver, velvet
$20 \times 7 \times \frac{3}{8}$"

Mace: copper, enamel, silverplated brass, silverplated bronze, walnut
35 x 5 x 4"
Photo: Jonathan Reynol

SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICAN GOLDSMITHS

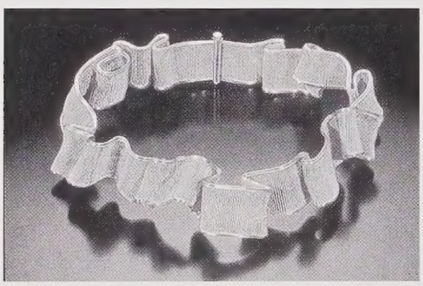
The Organization for Jewelers, Designers and Metalsmiths

"The Art of Gold" curator Michael Monroe

Michael Monroe to Curate "The Art of Gold"

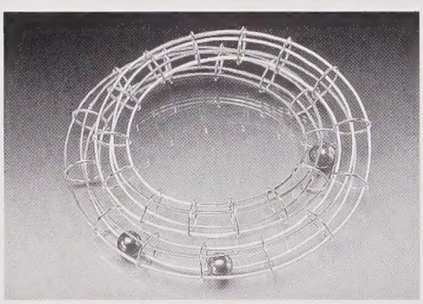
"The Art of Gold" is a SNAG-sponsored touring exhibition featuring approximately 80 pieces of the finest contemporary goldwork. Michael Monroe has recently become the curator of the exhibition. Currently an independent curator, Monroe has been involved with American craft for over 30 years. His many prominent positions include curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and curator of the White House Collection of American Craft.

"The Art of Gold" will open at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, in early 2003 and is currently booked at three other venues, with additional venues to be announced over the length of the three-year tour.



Honorary Member Award Design Competition

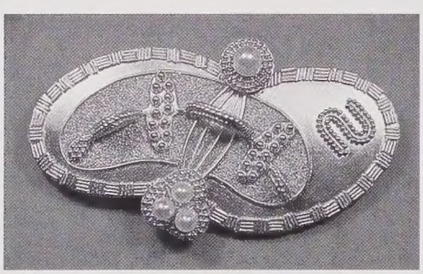
SNAG is sponsoring a design competition to create a lasting award to be presented to future recipients of SNAG's most prestigious accolade, the Honorary Member Award. Recent recipients of this award include Helen Drutt English, Arline Fisch, Phillip Morton, and Oppi Untracht. The winning designer will receive $500 in stakes and hammers, generously contributed by New York-based tool supplier Allcraft, in addition to the commission to produce the awards.



Emerging Artist Award

As part of our shared commitment to encourage new artists in the field, SNAG has helped to facilitate the development of an emerging artist award with Sienna Gallery of Lenox, Massachusetts. The biannual Sienna Gallery Emerging Artist Award provides a jeweler showing merit, skill, and innovation with a one-year SNAG membership, a monetary award, and a solo exhibition at the gallery. This year's jurors, jeweler Sandra Enterline of California, Joseph Thompson, Director of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), and Sienna Patti, Director of Sienna Gallery, reviewed 160 applications.

The recipient of award, Lola Brooks, currently teaches metals and enameling at University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and at the 92nd Street Y and Craft Students League, both in New York City. She received her BFA in Metals from the State University of New York at New Paltz in 1997. Her exhibition at the Sienna Gallery opens August 15, 2002.



left, top to bottom

Mary Lee Hu
Choker #83, 2000
18k, 22k, twined and fabricated
$6\,1/2 \times 6\,1/4 \times 1\,3/4$"
From "The Art of Gold"

Sam Shaw
Endless Bracelet
14k, South Sea pearls, fabricated
$4\,3/4 \times 4\,1/8 \times 1\,1/4$"
From "The Art of Gold"

Douglas Harling
Sea Saw, 1999
22k, fresh water pearls, granulation
$1\,1/2 \times 2\,1/2 \times 3/4$"
From "The Art of Gold"

Lola Brooks
Filigree Brooch, 2001
stainless steel, 18k gold, rose cut garnets
$2\,1/4 \times 1\,3/4$"

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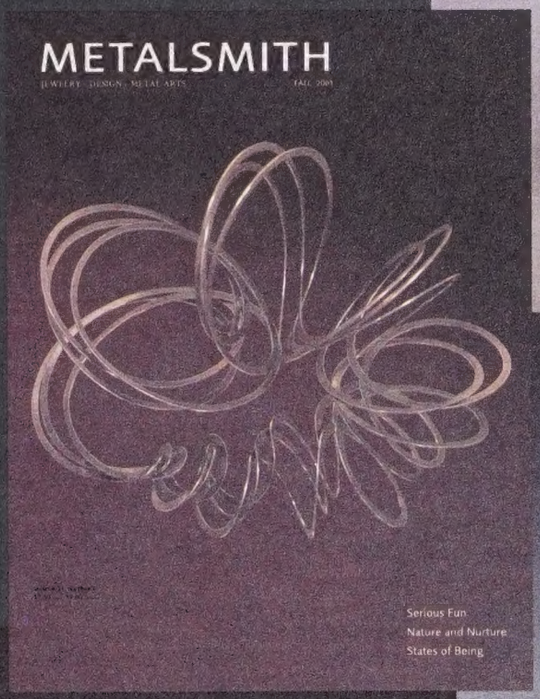

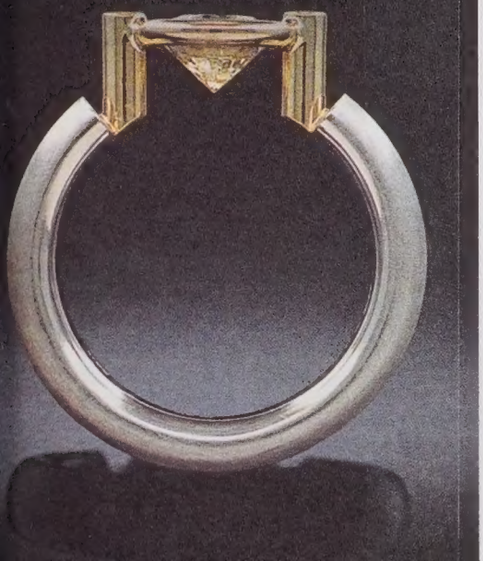

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opposite page, clockwise from top

Myra Mimlitsch-Gray
Cup with Oval, 1998
sterling silver
5 x 4 x 3"
Photo: Robert Storm

Biba Schutz
Ceremonial Pendant, 1998
copper, sterling, fine silver
4 3/4 x 1 1/4 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Ron Boszko

(Fall 2001 *Metalsmith*)
cover: Reiko Ishiyama
Bracelet, 2000
Photo: Ralph Gabriner

Helen Shirk
Sustaining Sprit XXVII, 2000
copper, patina, colored pencils
6 x 23 x 23"

Whitney Boin
Post Engagement Ring, 1996
produced since 1988
platinum, 18k
Photo: Todd Flashner

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Michael Boyd, Colorado
"Manipulation of Stones and Cold Connections with Stones"

Norman Cherry, England
"Grow Your Own—Angiogenetic Body Adornment"

Giovanni Corvaja, Italy
"In Search of Lightness, Transparency and Sensuality"

Lane Coulter, New Mexico
"Native American Jewelry Past and Present"

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Erick Johnson, Colorado
"The Eclipse of Material Presence"

Linda Kaye-Moses, Massachusetts
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For More Information

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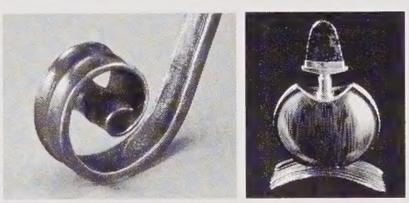

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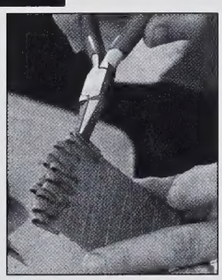

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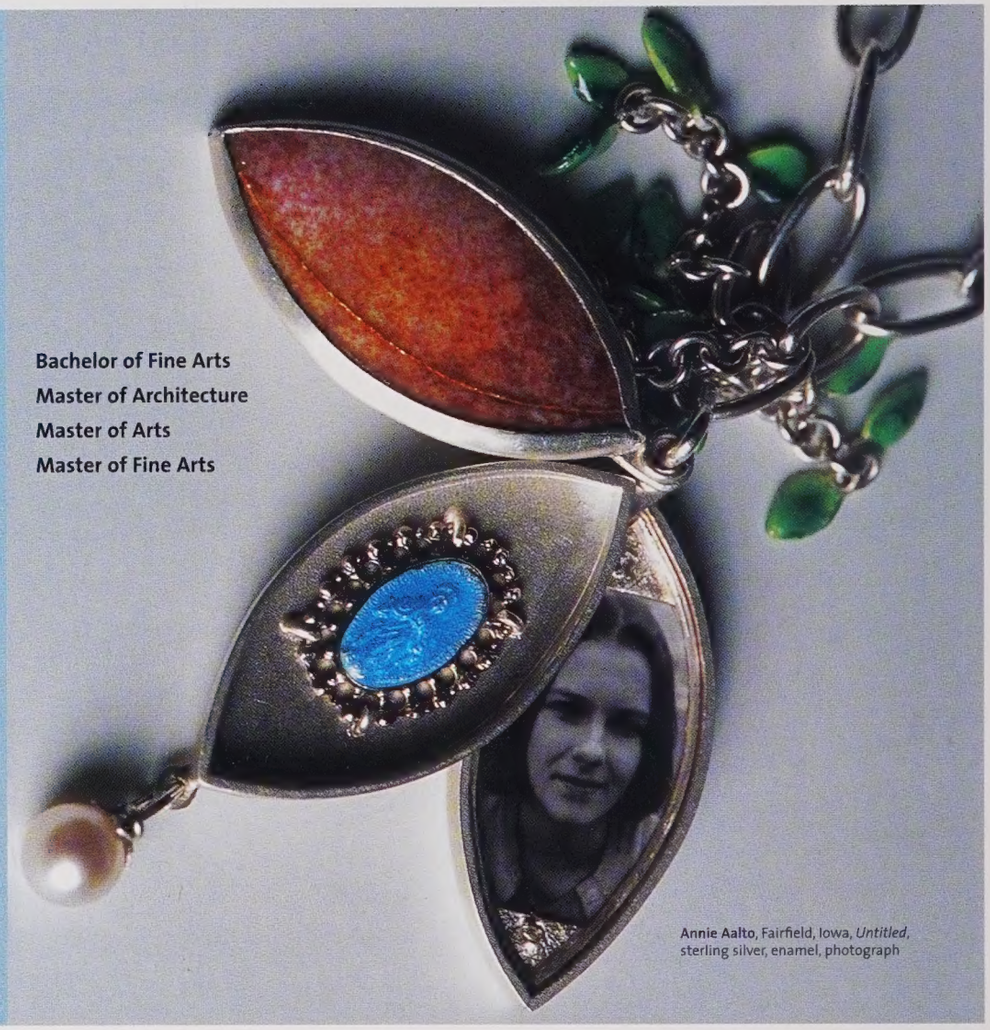

Annie Aalto, Fairfield, Iowa, *Untitled*, sterling silver, enamel, photograph

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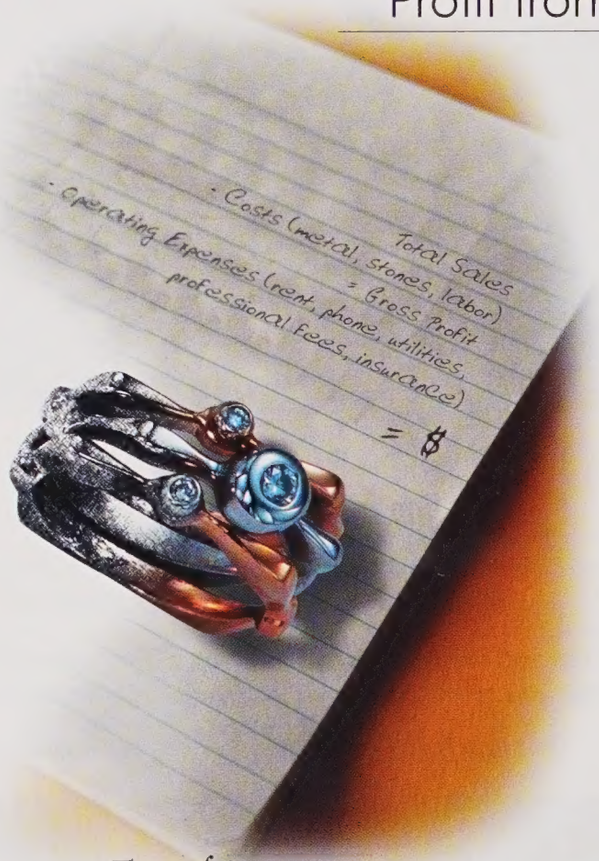
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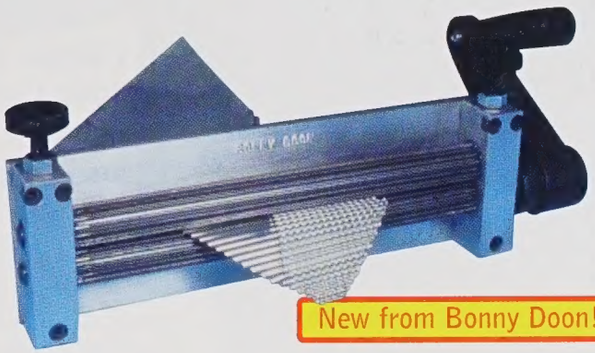

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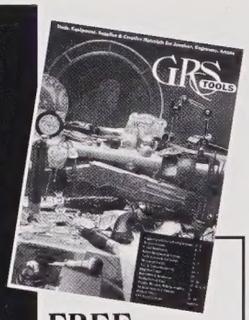

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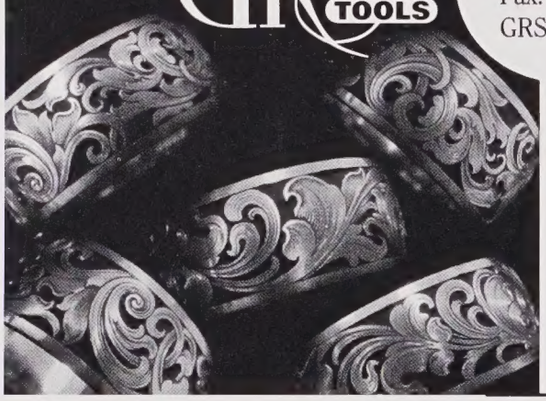

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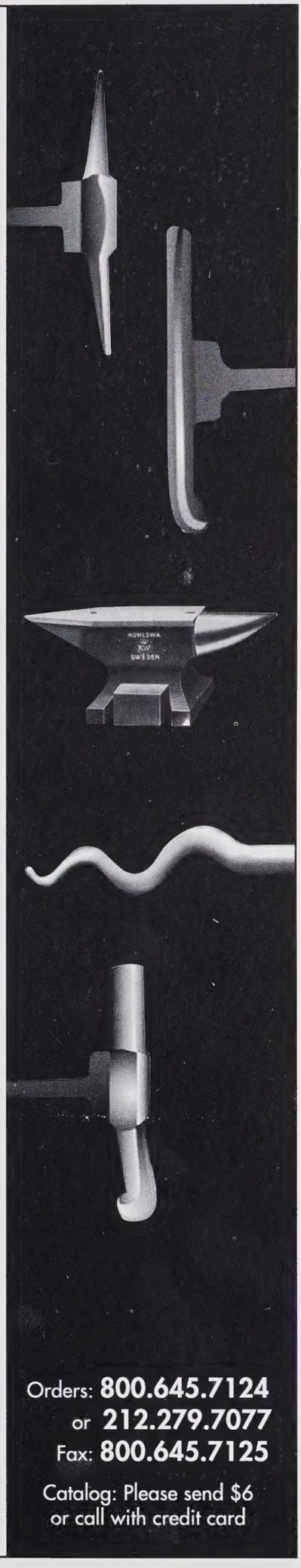

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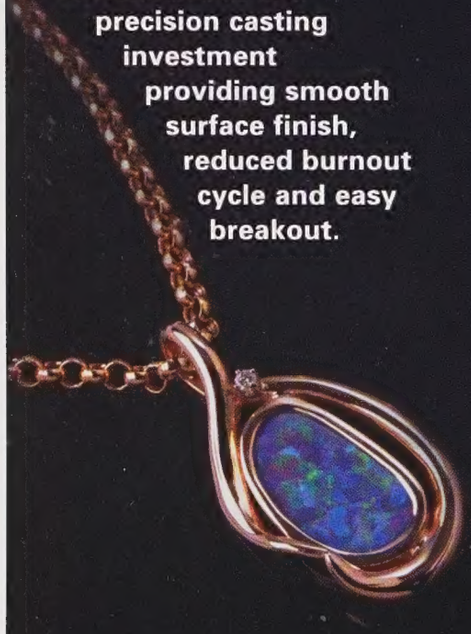

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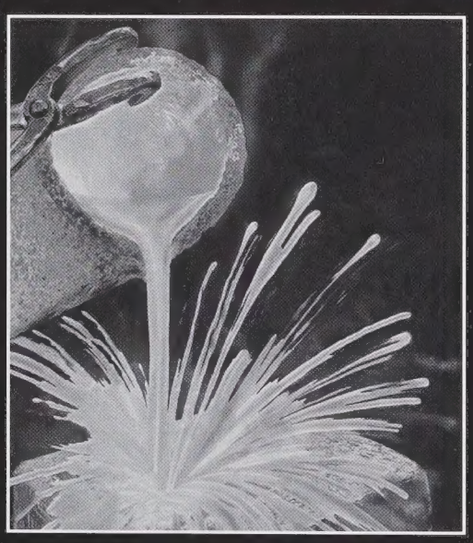

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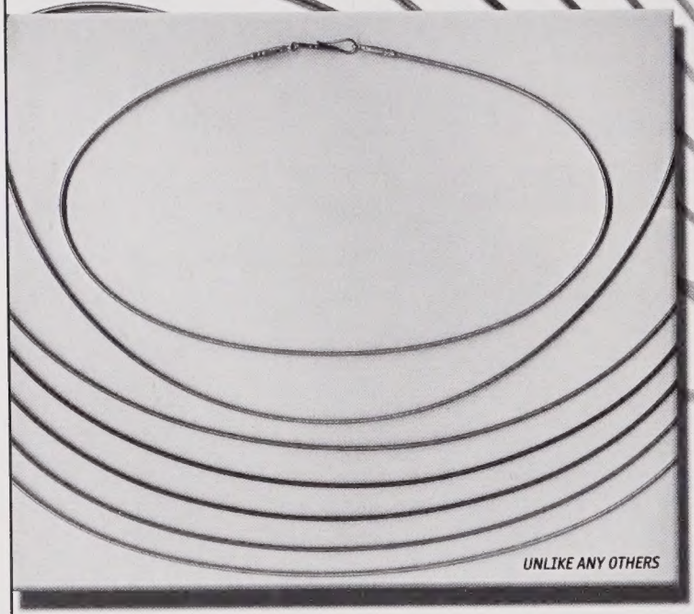

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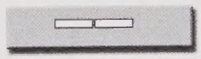
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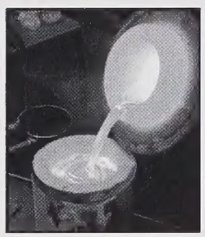

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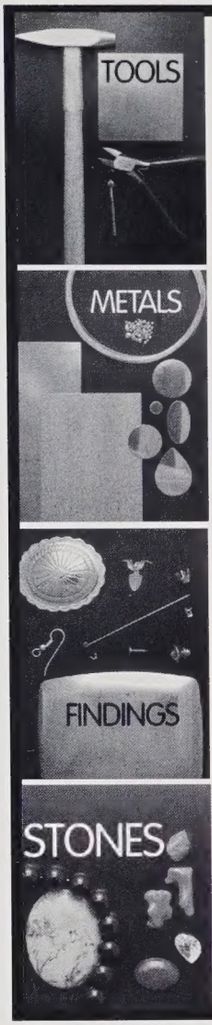

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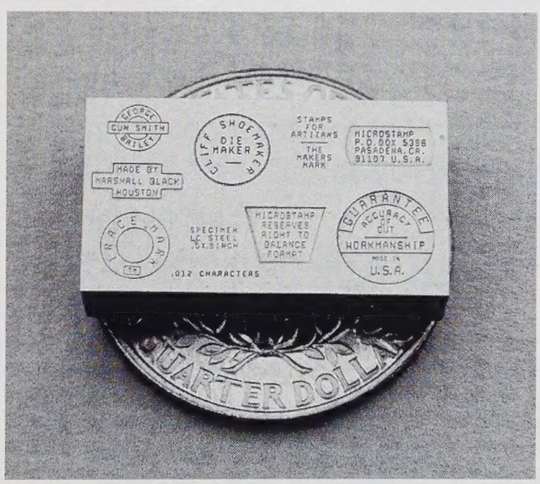
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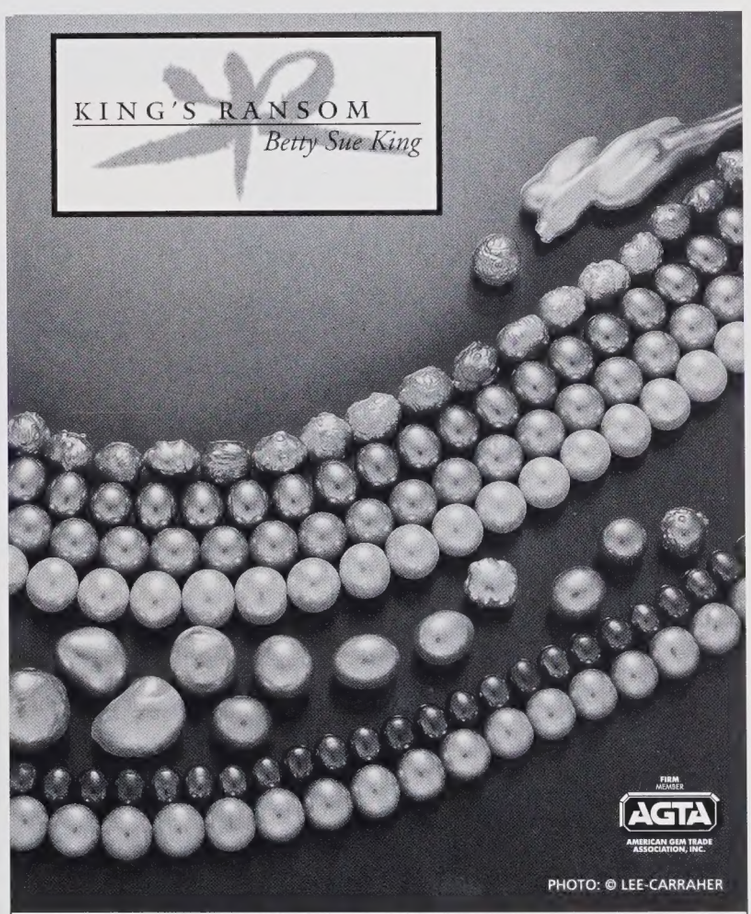

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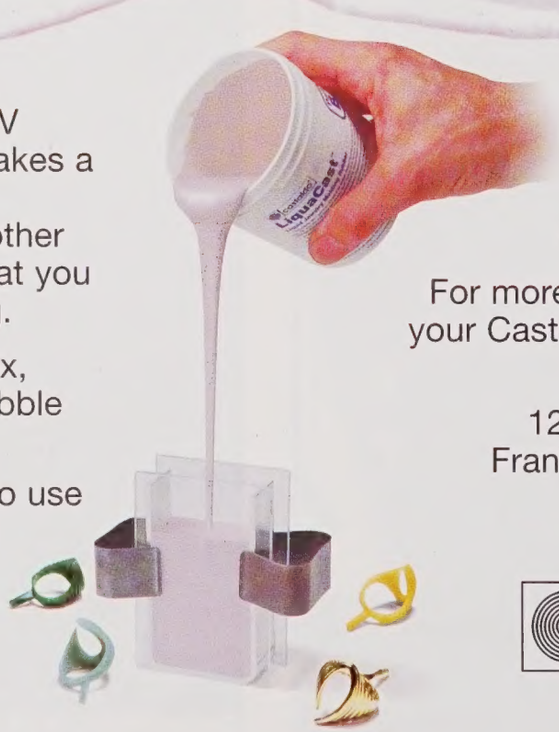

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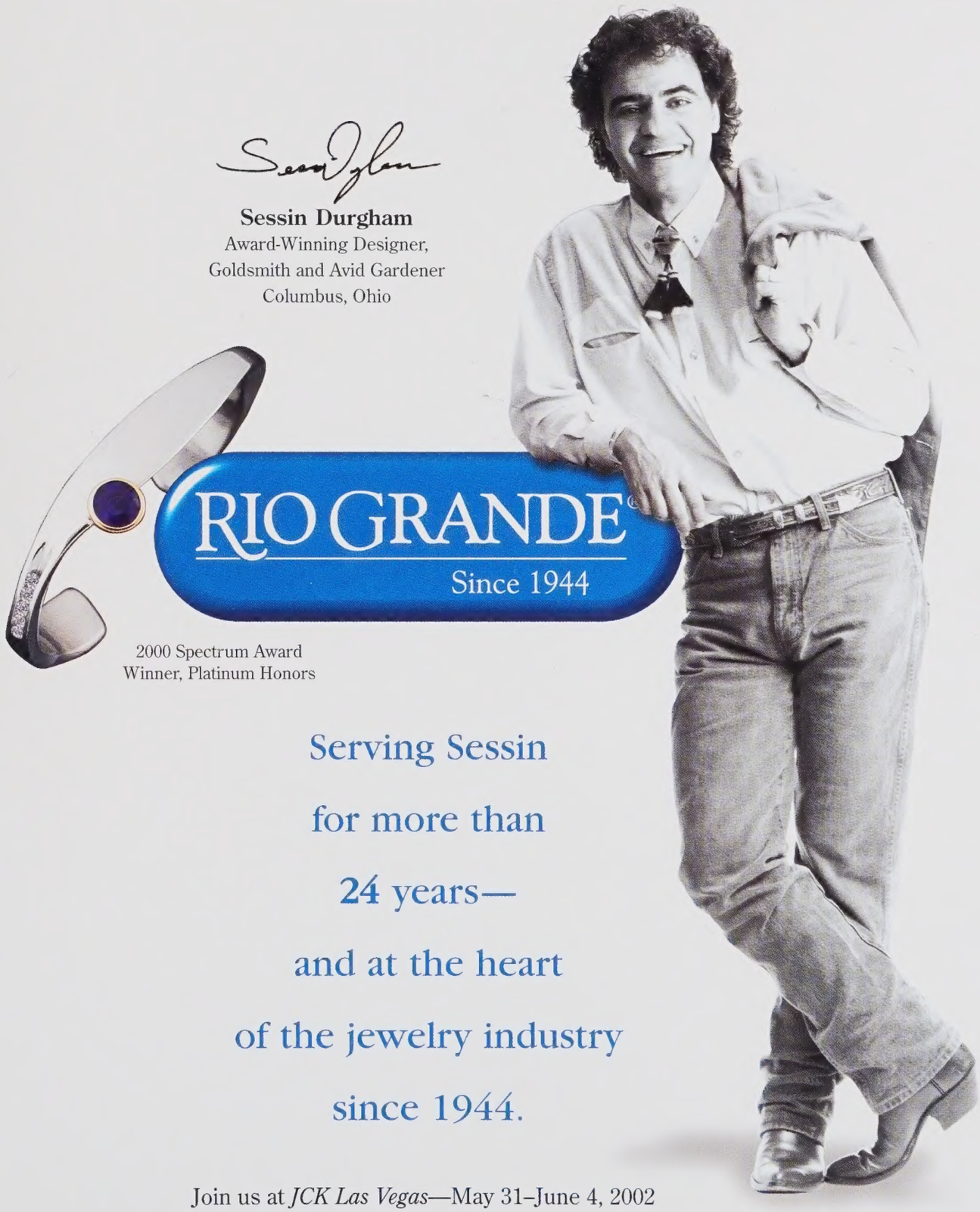

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Bracelet design by Sessin Durgham for Jack Seibert Goldsmith & Jeweler.

Portrait by Jennifer Long. Jewelry photo by Jerry Anthony.

The John Frei Custom Workbenches

Designed without compromise, these benches are the finest jewelers workbenches available. Built to be beautiful and sturdy, our solid wood workbenches are made in California by expert cabinet makers for jewelers, jewelry schools and jewelry workshops who demand quality tools. Standard features includes: stainless steel lined catch tray, two inch thick butcher block top, locking door with integral bur tray and two concealed security drawers plus six EZglide tool drawers. Available from stock or made to your specifications, in maple or oak. Shipped fully assembled.

Available Options

Simplified drawer lay outs for schools with individually locking drawers. Pull out layout board above locking door, pull out layout board beneath bench top, left hand bench, locking bank of drawers, custom finish/colors/or nude finish, block different locations, walnut or mahogany benches, GRS benchmate mounted in place of bench pin. Also double bank custom workbench. Contact us for your free full color benches selection guide. Or call for specialized design quote for your studio.

Double Bank Custom Workbench
A larger work area with twice as many storage drawers as our standard John Frei workbench. Measures 62" wide by 26" deep and stands 38" tall. Shown in oak.

Bank of Drawers on Casters
These portable storage drawers are made by us to compliment the John Frei custom workbenches. Locking casters makes the bank of drawers easy to move around your shop. Shown in oak.
Measures: 18"W x 26"D x 38"H

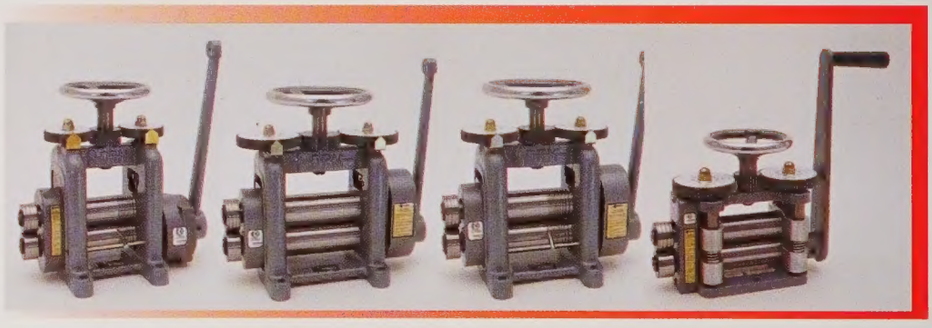
John Frei Custom Workbench
Overall dimensions: Standard Design 49"W x 26"D x 38"H

Detail *Four inch square hardened steel anvil block with bench pin, pull out tool tray with cut out for engravers block, two sturdy pull out arm rests, stain steel lined catch tray slides in and out.*

Detail *Locking top door with integral bur tray, two concealed security drawers, raised lip around bench top, two inch thick butcher block top.*

Two Station Custom Workbench
Popular for school and larger workshops. All the features of two separate John Frei workbenches with an added bank of drawers in the center. Shown in oak.
Overall dimension: 103"W x 26"D x 38"H.

Rolling Mill Specialist
Walzmaschinen Spezialist
Laminataio Specialista



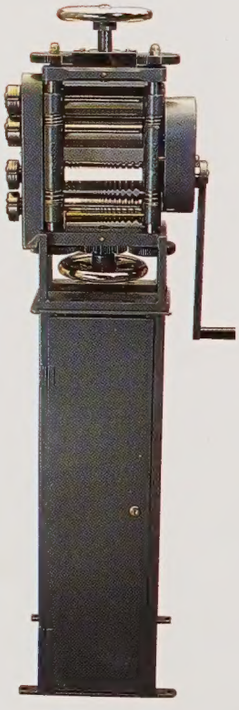
New Deluxe 100mm
Combo #128.108N
Flat #128.109N

New Deluxe 150mm
Combo #128.118N
Flat #128.119N

New Deluxe 130mm
Combo #128.130
Flat #128.132

Mini 100mm (pictured) **or Mini 80**
Combo 100 #128.100
Flat 100 #128.102

D2EX
120mm
With stand #128.115
Without stand #128.116



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